

THE  
BIBLE  
FOR HOME  
& SCHOOL

I. SAMUEL



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*THE BIBLE FOR HOME AND SCHOOL*

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THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

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SHAILER MATHEWS, GENERAL EDITOR

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THE BIBLE FOR HOME AND SCHOOL

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A COMMENTARY

ON THE

FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

BY

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SEMINARY, NEW YORK

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1919

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Set up and electrotyped. Published November, 1919.

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THE BIBLE FOR HOME AND SCHOOL is intended to place the results of the best modern biblical scholarship at the disposal of the general reader. It does not seek to duplicate other commentaries to which the student must turn. Its chief characteristics are (*a*) its rigid exclusion of all processes, both critical and exegetical, from its notes; (*b*) its presupposition and its use of the assured results of historical investigation and criticism wherever such results throw light on the biblical text; (*c*) its running analysis both in text and comment; (*d*) its brief explanatory notes adapted to the rapid reader; (*e*) its thorough but brief Introductions, (*f*) its use of the Revised Version of 1881, supplemented with all important renderings in other versions.

Biblical science has progressed rapidly during the past few years, but the reader still lacks a brief, comprehensive commentary that shall extend to him in usable form material now at the disposition of the student. It is hoped that in this series the needs of intelligent Sunday School teachers have been met, as well as those of clergymen and lay readers, and that in scope, purpose, and loyalty to the Scriptures as a foundation of Christian thought and life, its volumes will stimulate the intelligent use of the Bible in the home and the school.

SHAILER MATHEWS.



THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL





## INTRODUCTION

### I. THE CHARACTER AND PURPOSE OF FIRST SAMUEL

In the Hebrew canon 1 Samuel is grouped with Joshua, Judges, 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings, and to this collection of narrative literature is given the descriptive title "Former Prophets." They are not classified as historical treatises, but as prophetic teaching. They were compiled not as an accurate record of the nation's history, but as stories meant to teach great moral lessons. The compiler of Kings shows at times an impatience with what is merely historical, and so frequently refers the reader to the government annals for a record of facts.

The natural consequence is that the compilers were not critically discriminating in the use of their material. If a story contained the lesson they wanted to set forth, it was of small moment if the story contained an admixture of legend. If the editor had been cautioned that the tale of Samuel's smashing victory over the Philistines (1 Sam. 7) was not historically accurate, it would have made no difference to him, for the tale is made to show that Israel is strong when they are single in their devotion to their God, and that principle is sound even if Samuel never directly lifted a hand against the oppressors of his people. Naturally it is highly important for the student of these ancient books to read them from the point of view of those who produced them. And if he uses them as historical sources he must keep in mind the compiler's point of view.

The division between 1 and 2 Samuel is modern, and purely artificial. Hardly less artificial is the division between Samuel and Kings, for the latter books continue

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the story where it is left off in 2 Sam. 20. The most logical scheme is therefore that of the Greek texts in which these four books are grouped together as 1, 2, 3, and 4 Kings.

1 Samuel covers a period of transition in the conditions of Israel. At the beginning the people have no central authority, the same state as revealed in the book of Judges. Every tribe and almost every clan did what was right in its own eyes. At the end David is just ready to be crowned in Hebron as king of Judah, and to push his authority until it covers the whole nation, and to bring the state to the greatest strength it reached in its entire history.

The period covered is not much longer than the life of a single person. The book begins with the birth of a great seer, and it is apparent that Samuel had not long been dead when Saul falls on Mount Gilboa.

It is noticeable that the scholars who have written works on 1 Samuel do not agree in the division of the book into appropriate sections. The fact is that such division is difficult, for there are few natural points of cleavage. This difficulty is due partly to the overlapping of the prominent characters of the book, and partly to the construction. The compiler did not arrange his material in a systematic and logical order.

It is possible, however, to group the whole material around one general subject, the early efforts to throw off the Philistine yoke. The Philistines had migrated from the island of Crete and had gained possession of the important and fertile coast plain of Palestine. They were an aggressive and warlike people, and had pushed their boundaries eastward until they dominated the tribe of Judah, and the hills of Ephraim where the great tribe of Joseph had settled. The book of 1 Samuel tells the stories of the first known efforts of the Israelites to gain their freedom, efforts which at times won a measure of success, but which finally ended in the disaster of Gilboa.

There are four principal characters which stand out in this book. With the exception of cc. 4-6 practically all of the stories are more or less the personal history of Eli, Samuel, Saul and David. Two of these belong to the religious order, and two to the political. Further, the compiler of the book discloses a marked antipathy to two of these figures, one religious and the other political, Eli and Saul; and he betrays an equally strong prepossession in favor of the other two, Samuel and David, again one prominent in the religious and the other in the political sphere.

The ground of the animus against Eli is peculiar. In the original sources he appears as an honorable and upright priest; and in the later accretions even the only thing alleged against him is his failure to reprove his sons when they did wrong, and even this charge is contradicted by evidence in the book. The fact was that the house of Eli was nearly wiped out as the result of a disastrous battle with the Philistines. According to the theology of the Jews such a calamity must be the result of sin, for God would not permit such a blow to fall upon the righteous.<sup>1</sup> Eli and his house are marked as the objects of a terrible divine visitation, and therein is evidence of wrongdoing.

In the case of Saul the compiler looks at the matter from a different angle than we should take. The fault in Saul lies in his disobedience of Samuel's commands, 13 : 7b-15a, 15, although illegal sacrificing may be an element of wrong in the former case. It should be noted that the passages are parallel rather than complementary. Because he disobeyed Jahveh's prophet, his rejection from the throne is pronounced.

There is abundant cause for discrediting Saul's rule. Indeed it is difficult to see any great good in his reign save the rescue of Jabesh-gilead (c. 11). Though Saul was made king to deliver Israel from the oppressor, it was

<sup>1</sup> See my *Good and Evil*. L. W. B.

Jonathan, and not Saul, who first lifted a hand against the Philistines. In that action we find Saul too impatient to await the answer of Jahveh, and then making an oath which Jonathan denounced as foolish because it made the pursuit of the foe ineffective. Saul would have slain the hero of the battle save for the intervention of the army.

Nearly all the rest of his history is an account of his many efforts to kill David, who was one of his most loyal officers. Saul tried to bring about his death by treachery, by assassination, and even employed his whole army in mad pursuit of one of whom he was jealous and afraid. He mercilessly ordered the slaughter of a whole company of priests because he was convinced that one of them had aided and abetted the fugitive. It is true that most of the evils of Saul's reign may have been due to mental disease, but whatever be the cause of his errors, there are many counts in the indictment against the Benjamite house.

## II. THE COMPOSITION OF FIRST SAMUEL

More important than the vain attempt to divide the book into logical sections is the resolution of the present composite text into its original sources, and here again we are confronted in certain parts with a problem of considerable difficulty. The book has been edited by more than one hand, and as we shall see, existed once in more than one edition. In its substantially original form the book was still a compilation, and it is necessary for the careful student who would use the book as a historical source to differentiate between the sources. To begin with the simplest problem, it is quite easy to detect two distinct sources, and in a measure to apportion their limits. Before undertaking this task, and partly to justify results different from others, it is necessary to consider for a moment an element upon which insufficient stress has been laid.

If we may for convenience apply the term to the prophetic books in which alone we find the material, early

Hebrew history is written from two radically different points of view, which may be called the national and the tribal. In the time of David, and under the influence of his great personality, the tribes of Israel were welded into a nation. Now many writers of much later ages seem to have assumed that Israel had always been a nation, compact and homogeneous. They describe all the early actions as if they were national. A good illustration is found in Josh. 1-12, where the conquest of Canaan is pictured as the accomplishment of all the tribes working together under a single leader of unquestioned authority. We may denote this writer, or this school of writers, by the self-explanatory symbol N.

There were other writers who perceived that most of the known events in the early history were the work of the various separate tribes, or even of parts of the tribes. The exploits in the book of Judges were movements of clans, or tribes, or a temporary confederation of tribes. Fragments in Josh. 13 ff. show that some of the work of the conquest was tribal. Similarly we may apply the symbol T to writings revealing this point of view. It is further to be noted that T gives the earlier and more correct account of the history, while N is later and tends to idealization of the early events.

Both points of view appear in 1 Samuel, and perhaps an analysis on that principle is the most helpful. It is impossible to say who wrote any section of the book or when the various parts were written. But we can classify a part of the material accurately according to the point of view.

It is best to take first that part in which the task is simplest, and the results surest. Differing somewhat from the usual treatment which makes the end of ch. 15 a sharp divisional point, I prefer to discuss chs. 1-16 together. On the ground of reasons assigned in the introduction to the sections, under T (=Smith's Sl.) I group chs. 1-6 (except 2 : 17-36; 3 : 12-21); 9 : 1-10 : 16, 11, 13 (except vs. 7b-15a)

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14, 15 : 35-16. The rest belongs to N (=Smith's Sm.) i. e., the three large sections (1) chs. 7: (2) 8, 10 : 17-27; 12; (3) 15; and the small pieces 2 : 17-36; 3 : 12-21; 13 : 7b-15a.

These conclusions differ from those reached by others in regard to two passages, chs. 1-3 and 16 : 1-13, which are usually classified with the later source. This verdict seems to me unsound, for the pieces have all the characteristics of the primitive stories, and the national point of view is not apparent at all. Critics have failed to note that with the exception of two interpolated passages chs. 1-3 makes an excellent introduction to Samuel the seer of Ephraim, whose one great passion was the deliverance of his country from the heavy yoke of the Philistines. And still more they have failed to see that the Samuel of 16 : 1-13 is this same seer, consumed by the same passion, and altogether different from the Samuel as seen in the sources marked N.

In chs. 17-21 we find the greatest difficulties. These chapters in general describe Saul's persecution of David resulting in his flight from the court. The material is usually divided into two strands; thus Smith assigns 18 : 6-13, 20-29a; 19 : 11-17; 21 : 2-10; to one source, and 17 : 1-18 : 5 : 14-19; 18 : 30-19 : 10; 19 : 18-24; 21 : 11-16, to another, while ch. 20 he looks upon as coming from a third source. His conclusions represent the general judgment of scholars of the present time.

It is a noteworthy fact that we do not find two different points of view in this section, save in minor passages, nor do we discover the evident marks of a late age except in the same small sections. The question therefore arises whether we are justified in the radical treatment usually given to the section. My study has convinced me that with certain small exceptions the whole passage belongs to the early David stories.

In 17 : 1-18 : 5 we must take the original text as shown in G., i. e., omitting 17 : 12-31; 17 : 55-18 : 5, and with other minor changes explained in the commentary, and we have the necessary connecting links between ch. 16 and 18 : 6 ff.



David as Saul's armor bearer accepts the challenge of a mighty Philistine warrior, and saves Israel. In ch. 18 we must assign vs. 8-10 to a secondary source, and connect vs. 17-19 with 17 : 12-31. Then we have a consistent story of Saul's jealousy, his reduction of David from armor bearer to a captaincy, and his futile attempt to entrap him with his daughter.

In 19 : 1-17 there is no difficulty. Jonathan successfully intervenes for David, but when he again appears before Saul, the latter's passions are rekindled, and he attempts David's life. David dodges the spear and retires to his own house. Saul's plan to bring him back to his death is frustrated by the clever and faithful Michal, and David escapes. But where does he go? According to the present arrangement of the text he goes to Samuel at Ramah, and is protected by the prophet.

Now this section 19 : 18-24 is confidently assigned to a late source. But Samuel is not necessarily a national figure here, and the prophetic frenzy is characteristic of the early prophetic story, *cf.* ch. 10. The section may easily be retained, but it must be transposed, and put after Jonathan's test in ch. 20.

When David fled from his house he sought Jonathan, and I see no reason why that is out of the range of probability. David was no coward and he was resourceful, and he can have a secret interview with his friend without serious danger. He would hardly like to flee the court permanently without the knowledge and approval of his princely associate. David assures Jonathan that his danger is very great, but Jonathan is doubtful because Saul has said nothing about the matter to him since he had effected an adjustment, 19 : 1-7. The chief difficulty is the supposition that Saul would expect David to take his place at the feast as formerly. But we must remember that the king was deranged and it is evident that David has no intention of exposing himself to danger unless he is assured that Saul's attempts on his life were due to

periodic mental attacks. For we must remember that the attempted assault was made when the king was mad.

After the test it was clear that David could not return to court. There is no reason why he should not seek counsel of the seer who had started him on his career. After Saul's discovery of his hiding place and repeated attempts to seize him, he naturally abandons Ramah, and in the course of his flight stops at the temple at Nob.

The appearance at Gath 21 : 10-15 is probably from a secondary source, but it is by no means a parallel to ch. 27. For the question of the Gittite king "wherefore have ye brought him to me," shows that the Philistines had run across David, arrested him, and brought him to Achish under the suspicion that he was David their inveterate foe. The incident is improbable in view of the fact that later David was accepted at the court without question, and the reference to David as king indicates a late hand.

In chs. 22-31 there are three main subjects, David as chief of a band of outlaws, 22 : 1-5, 20-23; 25, 27 : 1-28 : 2; 29, 30, Saul's pursuit of David, 23 : 15-24, 26, and Saul's last battle with the Philistines, 28 : 3-25; 31. There is besides the story of the murder of the priests of Nob 22 : 6-19.

The chief difficulty in this section is found in 23 : 15-24, 26 and 28 : 3-25. Chs. 24 and 26 tell a precisely similar story and are regarded as duplicate versions of the same event, ch. 26 being judged the more original. As a matter of fact it is doubtful if either version contains authentic history. In all the other stories, the abandonment of Keilah, the desperate pursuit in 23 : 15 ff., and the flight to a foreign country, it appears that David really seeks to keep well out of Saul's way, and with his four hundred against the king's three thousand, he might well avoid an issue at arms. Both the stories in chs. 24 and 26 seem to have the marks of late tales.

On the other hand, I do not feel the usual objection to ch. 28. It has evidently been worked over by a late hand,



putting a too specific prediction into the mouth of an ancient spiritualist, but the main part of the story appears to possess primitive characteristics. With the exception therefore of chs. 24 and 26, and a few small sections as already pointed out, and some redactional modifications, chs. 17-31 may be regarded as a good and early source for the history of Saul's closing days and of David's early achievements.

There is one peculiarly difficult historical problem confronting the student of this book. Saul charges David with attempts upon the throne, and on this ground tries in vain to accomplish his destruction; he accuses Jonathan of connivance in David's treachery. Was this the hallucination of a disordered brain, or was there some basis for Saul's suspicion?

It is clear that David disavows any hostility towards Saul, and Jonathan likewise persists that there is no ground whatever for his father's charges. On the other hand, there are many references to David's coming power. Samuel declares that Jahveh will give the kingdom to Saul's neighbor, 13 : 14; 15 : 28, he anoints David as Saul's successor, 16 : 1-13, and is brought from the grave to reiterate his prophecy, 28 : 17. Jonathan clearly expresses his conviction that David is to become king, 20 : 146; 23 : 17. Abigail knows of the purpose of Jahveh to put David on the throne, 25 : 30 f.; the elders of Israel have the same idea, 2 Sam. 5 : 2; and even the Philistines recognize him as a king, 21 : 11. Finally Saul himself recognizes David as a destined king, and exacts an oath that he will not exterminate the house of Saul, 24 : 20 ff. The difficulty lies in the fact that nearly all of these passages are regarded as coming from a late source, in which David's course in seizing the throne is justified as having divine sanction.

To start upon sure ground, we know that the moment David learned of the death of Saul, he went to Hebron and was crowned King of Judah, 2 Sam. 2 : 1-4, and that he at once set about the overthrow of Saul's successor.

Coming backward we find that he had paved the way for the Judean crown by sending presents to various Judean towns while Saul yet lived, 30 : 26 ff. He had levied tribute upon the shepherd clans in the Judean wilderness as a *quid pro quo* for the protection he afforded them, 25 : He had taken it upon himself to drive away the Philistines who were attacking a Judean town, 23 : 1-15. He had at the very first tried to maintain himself in a stronghold, 22 : 1-5. It appears that David was aiming to be the head of the scattered and heterogeneous clans which in those early days made up the tribe of Judah, but was thwarted by the persistent attacks of Saul. So far we derive our conclusions from reliable sources. Can we go any further?

In an early source Saul makes the charge that David and Jonathan have made a league against him, and that his son has stirred up David to oppose the king, 22 : 8. In conformity with this view, at their last reported interview, Jonathan says to David that the latter will be king of Israel, and the former the king's prime minister, 23 : 17. The latter passage is regarded as late and spurious, chiefly I fancy, because of its contents. On the contrary it seems to be just what we need to complete our account. The story of David may very probably be this:

Samuel had anointed him in the expectation that once started on a career under the influence of the spirit of God he would win through to the throne, which at that period would naturally fall to the best man. Jonathan became deeply attached to David, and when the latter was driven from Saul's court there was a league between them. David was to undertake to consolidate and govern the scattered clans of Judah, which were quite outside of Saul's jurisdiction, and after Saul's death, David was to receive the crown of Judah, and Jonathan, if still alive, was to be his chief officer; if Jonathan fell with or before his father, David was to protect his seed. David's course was perfectly consistent with that program. If this con-

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clusion be sound, Saul's suspicions were at the first baseless, and his own jealousy of his servant's superior prowess, drove David to the course which led to the throne. David first conceived the plan to take the leadership in Judah after he was driven from Saul's court, and was led to seek further the throne of Israel after learning of the death of Jonathan.

There is a large number of apparent duplicates in our book. Cheyne has made a catalogue of eleven (*Aids to the Devout Study of Criticism*, pp. 8 ff.) and even his list is defective. To complete the account we find: (1) 2 : 17-36=3 : 12-21, the prediction of the fall of the house of Eli; (2) 8 : 10 : 17-27; 12=9, 10 : 1-16; 11, Saul's elevation to the throne; (3) 10 : 10-12=19 : 22-24, "Is Saul among the prophets?"; (4) 13 : 7b-15a=15, the rejection of Saul; (5) 16 : 14-23=17 : 55-18 : 5, David attached to Saul's court; (6) 17 : 1-54=2 Sam. 21 : 19, the death of Goliath; (7) 18 : 10 f.=19 : 9 f., casting a spear at David; (8) 18 : 17-19=18 : 20-27, Saul's daughter used to trap David; (9) 19 : 1-7=20, Jonathan's effort to save David; (10) 20 : 11-17=23 : 16-18, the covenant between Jonathan and David; (11) 21 : 10-11=27, David at Gath; (12) 24=26, David spares Saul's life; (13) 31=2 Sam. 1 : 1-16, Saul's death.

This catalogue is conclusive evidence that the books of Samuel are composite, and that the editor had various sources. It is clear that it often happened that the same story appeared in different sources, but with considerable discrepancy in the details. It is fortunate that the editor was not an accomplished critical genius, and so did not weigh the material, choosing one and rejecting the other, but frequently retained both versions. He could follow that course the more readily, because we know that his interest was not historical, but religious, and he often found a religious interest in each of two discrepant stories, and to lose nothing, incorporated them both. In our quest for the historic events, we are often constrained to use one story or the other, or perhaps combine elements from both.

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### III. TEXT AND VERSIONS

For a full account of the various texts and versions of Samuel, recourse should be had to the exhaustive work of Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel*. Here it suffices to notice the evidence that as late as the third century B. C., there were different recensions of the book in existence, and therefore the adoption of what became a standard text is later than that time. The notes show that the Codex Vaticanus of the Septuagint (G) has sometimes brief passages which are not found in the Hebrew, and that it frequently lacks passages, occasionally of considerable length, which are found in the Hebrew text which finally survived as the standard.

It is true that these differences may be accounted for in either one of two ways. The translators may have known of different recensions of the Hebrew text, and chose one at variance with that which has been handed down to us. Or they may have exercised great freedom, making additions freely where it suited their purpose, and making omissions when that seemed to be the right course. The latter alternative is altogether improbable, for the Greeks who made the Septuagint text were translators, and not critics. Moreover, it is impossible to explain the addition and omissions, or better the plus and the minus, on any critical grounds. On the surface, for example, it may be said that these translators deliberately omitted 17:12-31; 17:55-18:5 to avoid contradictions. To which the rejoinder must be made, that those omissions remove but a part of the discrepancies, and that there are numerous other irreconcilable duplicates both of which are fully preserved.

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1. Chs. 13-15. The first stage: War with the Philistines and Amalekites.

2. 16:1-18:4. The second stage: David is attached to Saul's Court.

3. 18:5-28:2. The third stage: vain efforts to destroy David.

4. 28:3-31:13. The fourth stage: The disaster to the house of Saul.

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# THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

## I. THE CONDITIONS WHICH PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE KINGDOM, CHS. 1-7

### 1. *Samuel Becomes Prophet and Judge*, Chs. 1-3

#### (1) *The Story of Hannah*, 1 : 1-2 : 11

1. Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son

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1 : 1-4 : 1a. There are two strands in the narrative, one of which concerns Samuel, and the other the two sons of Eli. Belonging to the Samuel section we have 1 : 1-2 : 11, 18-21, 26, 3 : 1-4 : 1a. It is probable that the two sections were originally separate, and are combined here around the person of Eli, because he was Samuel's chief as well as the father of the discredited Hophni and Phinehas. They are woven together, because the stories about Eli's sons serve as a background for 4-6, and those about Samuel for 7-16 : 13.

In the Samuel section, if we leave out 2 : 26, 3 : 11-4 : 1a, the material has the character of primitive stories, and it serves perfectly well as an introduction to Samuel the local seer of ch. 9. This early story has been annotated so that in its present form it prepares the way for Samuel as the famous national figure in ch. 7 and other places.

In the rest there is a primitive note except in 2 : 17-36, which is a *vaticinium post eventum*. It is clear that the story of Eli's sons is put here to account for their death in ch. 4. There was originally a story of the abuse of the priests, and the compiler uses that, with certain additions to point the moral. Violent death was supposed to be a visitation from God, and the material is worked up accordingly. The compiler has incorporated two stories to explain the death of



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2. of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite: and he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had
  3. children, but Hannah had no children. And this man
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Eli's sons, one from a "man of God," 2 : 17-36, the other a revelation to Samuel, 3 : 12-19, both being relatively late productions.

Doubtless the two stories are woven together to explain the fact that at the beginning of the period Eli was the oracle, and later on Samuel occupies that place.

1-8. Hannah the barren wife

1. **Ramathaim-Zophim.** As Ramah is elsewhere the name of the residence of Elkanah and of Samuel, 1 : 19; 2 : 11, 7 : 17, the form *Ramathaim* must be an error. Ramah means *hill* and therefore naturally was a common name. Several places are so called in the Bible, and it is impossible to identify the site further than its location in the hills of Ephraim. After G. it is better to read *Zuphite* instead of *Zophim*. Zuph then would be the founder of the Ephraimite clan to which Elkanah belonged, and the term *Zuphite* marks his family as *Ephraimite* marks his tribe. Others regard Zuph as a geographical term, the land being personified as the ancestor (*cf.* Driver). Elkanah's ancestry is traced back four generations, after the manner of the later writers. In 1 Chr. 6 : 26 f., 36 f. there are parallel and slightly different genealogies of Samuel, in the latter of which his ancestry is traced back much further to Levi. The evidence that Samuel was an Ephraimite is so clear that we must suppose the Chronicler bases his statement on the fact that Samuel served as a priest. In Samuel's day one could be a priest without being a Levite. Elkanah is pictured as a religious man, faithfully observing the regular seasons and sacrifices, and as a just man in his tender treatment of his childless wife.

2. **Hannah had no children**, or *child* as G. Barrenness was regarded as a serious evil among the Jews. Elkanah's condition was much like Jacob's in that the wife he loved most bore no children.

3. **From year to year**, i. e., *yearly*. There was at the time therefore but a single annual festival. The earliest code of laws provides for three yearly pilgrimages to the sanctuary, Ex. 24 : 14-17. The festival kept by Elkanah seems to be the ingathering, which came at the end of the year. Shiloh is about 9 miles north of Bethel. From Judg. 18 : 31 it appears to have been regarded as a national sanctuary, and the evidence of Jer. 7 : 12 confirms that inference. At this time there was a regular temple at Shiloh, and this temple was later destroyed, but when the calamity happened we do not know. Well-



- went up out of his city from year to year to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests
4. unto the LORD, were there. And when the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he gave to Peninnah his wife,
5. and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: but unto Hannah he gave a <sup>1</sup> double portion: for he loved Hannah, but the LORD had shut up her womb. And
6. her rival provoked her sore,<sup>1<sup>a</sup></sup> for to make her fret,

<sup>1</sup> Or, a double portion, because she had no child.

<sup>1<sup>a</sup></sup> Better, on account of her barrenness.

hausen says it was destroyed at the battle of Ebenezer, 1 Sam. 4; but in that chapter there is no reference to such a catastrophe. Shiloh was the home of the prophet Ahijah, 1 Kings 14 : 2, 4, and the temple may have been standing in his day. **And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas.** These men have no rôle in this part of the story. Eli himself serves as priest: G. patches up the text by prefixing Eli, reading *Eli and his two sons*, but Eli is sufficiently introduced when Hannah goes to the temple, v. 9. The passage must be regarded as a harmonistic gloss, or as misplaced from 2 : 12 where it might stand quite suitably.

4. Most scholars regard vs. 4b-7a as parenthetical, regarding the story proper as running thus: *And when the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, then she wept and did not eat.* This opinion seems to me wrong, for it leaves us without the real cause of Hannah's grief. The cause of Hannah's tears was the fact of her barrenness, not Peninnah's jeers, and she was reminded of her estate by the single portion assigned to her. There is a part of the section which is not parenthetical, being in fact a later addition, viz. vs. 6-7a. This passage has a very different text in G. and contains a clause needlessly repeated from v. 5. G. lacks *and to her daughters*, probably from the notion that girls did not participate in religious sacrifices but cf. Deut. 12 : 12.

5. **Double portion** is impossible. The Hebrew has *one portion*, followed by a word which means *nostrils*, and which makes no sense here; the clause in G. *because she had no child*, completes the sense and gives the correct text. By a slight correction from Gr. we read the next sentence: *nevertheless he loved Hannah, though Jahveh had shut up her womb.* Barrenness was deemed a divine visitation, and so could be removed by divine intervention, cf. Judg, 13 : 2 ff.

7. because the LORD had shut up her womb. And <sup>1</sup> as he did so year by year, when she <sup>1a</sup> went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she
8. wept, and did not eat. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am
9. not I better to thee than ten sons? So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk.<sup>2</sup> Now Eli the priest sat upon his seat by the
10. door post of the temple of the LORD. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and

<sup>1</sup> Better, *so she did.*  
before the Lord.

<sup>1a</sup> Read with V *they.*

<sup>2</sup> G. adds, *and she stood*

7. The implication is that the rival-wife provoked Hannah only or chiefly at the time of the annual pilgrimage to Shiloh. But she would certainly not fail to use other opportunities. **He did.** The text must be changed to read *she did*, for vs. 6-7a contains the story, probably interpolated, of Peninnah's harassing Elkanah's favorite wife. *And she wept* goes back to the single portion of v. 5.

8. **Better than ten sons.** Elkanah refers to his love for Hannah. The point of his question is that the love of her husband, which she has, is better than ten sons without the husband's love, and that was probably Peninnah's portion.

9-18. Hannah prays for a son.

9. The added clause from G. seems necessary here, otherwise we have no statement of Hannah's going to the temple to pray. When the sacrificial meal was completed Hannah bethinks herself of relief from her distress, and that can only be found in bearing a child. **His seat.** The word implies a position of dignity, like a *throne*. It appears that at the entrance of the temple there was a seat which belonged to the officiating priest. **Temple of the Lord.** The word *temple* is never applied to a tent, and therefore it is plain that there was a permanent sanctuary at Shiloh at this period. This conclusion is confirmed by the use of the term *door post*.

10. **Bitterness of soul.** Hannah was in deep distress, because, though her husband loved her, she had never been able to requite her husband's love by bearing him a child. In her distress she went to the temple to pray, the recourse of a pious woman who believed that God's power to help mankind is unlimited. There is nothing

11. wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me,<sup>1</sup> and not forget thine handmaid,<sup>1</sup> but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life,<sup>2</sup> and there shall no razor come upon  
12. his head. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.

<sup>1</sup> Omitted in G.<sup>2</sup> G. adds: *and wine and liquor he shall not drink.*

in the Heb. to indicate Hannah's position; but it is probable that she went into the temple; for that would be the most natural place to say her prayer and to make her vow. The inference has the support of the G. addition in v. 9. From his seat at the door Eli could see her whether she was inside the temple or outside.

11. **And she vowed a vow.** The vow was very common in Hebrew religion. It was always voluntarily made by one who desired peculiar assistance from God; it has always the character of an agreement, the suppliant promising faithfully to do something supposed to be particularly pleasing to God, on condition that God would grant the desired favor; *cf.* the cases of Jacob, Gen. 28 : 20 ff., and of Jephthah, Judg. 11 : 30 ff. In later days there was apparently much laxity in the keeping of vows, Eccles. 5 : 4 f., Num. 30 : ff. Hannah craves a son, and vows that if a son is given her, he shall be dedicated to the Lord as a Nazarite, and shall become a temple servant. **A man child**, literally, *seed of men*, an expression used only here. It would naturally be a general expression for *a child*; the context shows that a male child is meant. **No razor shall come upon his head** is interpreted to mean that Samuel was to belong to the order of Nazarites, one of the rules of which was not to shave the head, Num. 6 : 1-8. The understanding of the G. is plain since it has added the rule of the order. But the prohibition of drink was later, so far as the child is concerned. In the story of Samson the mother was forbidden strong drink during the period of gestation, but the sole rule for the child was that his head should not be shaved, Judg. 13 : 5. Samuel never seems to have served like Eli as a priest at a temple, and was known later chiefly as a prophet.

12. **Continued praying.** The Heb. words are difficult to render idiomatically, but imply that Hannah kept up her prayer for a considerable time. The idea is that Hannah prayed so long that the priest's attention was attracted. *Marked*, or better, *was watching*.

13. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli  
 14. thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy  
 15. wine<sup>1</sup> from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured  
 16. out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and my provocation have

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<sup>1</sup> Instead of *from thee* G. has: *and depart from the presence of the Lord.*

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The priest did not interpose his rebuke until he had observed the supplicant for a sufficient time to confirm his suspicion that she was drunk.

13. **Only her lips moved.** Hannah's method of praying was evidently unusual so that Eli misinterpreted her strange actions as due to drink. Inebriety was apparently not an uncommon sequel to the sacred feasts. (Cf. 1 Cor. 11 : 21.)

14. In G. the rebuke is administered by Eli's servant, but as the servant does not appear elsewhere in the story, this text is an attempt to shield the priest from a blunder. **Put away thy wine**, i. e., *give up the bad habit of indulging in wine to excess.* In G. the rebuke goes further, ordering the suffering woman away from the temple.

15. **Sorrowful spirit** is a sympathetic, but inaccurate rendering. The word does not mean *sorrowful*, but *hard, severe, stubborn.* The idea may be that Hannah takes the attitude of Jacob (Gen. 32 : 26), and will not leave the temple until assured that her prayer will be answered. But it is best to amend the text with G. and read, *a hard life*, the reference being to her years as a childless wife.

16. **A daughter of Belial** occurs nowhere else, but the similar phrase *sons of Belial* is frequently applied to men that are thoroughly bad, e. g., 1 Sam. 2 : 12, 2 Sam. 16 : 7. The word is usually regarded as a compound of words meaning *not* and *worth*. But Heb. uses compounds only in proper names, and this is probably the name of some being of bad repute. The word is found as a proper name (see Moore's *Judges*, p. 419). **Hitherto** is not very happy. Smith emends the text and reads: *have I continued [praying] until now.* Hannah means to assert that the prayers, which were [hitherto] so long protracted, were the natural result of the excess of her distress.

17. I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thy petition that
18. thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thy servant find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*.
19. And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah
20. his wife; and the LORD remembered her. And it came to pass, when the time was come about, that Hannah conceived, and bare a son; and she called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the

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17. **Grant thy petition.** As the words are read Eli does no more than add his prayer to Hannah's. But the mere endorsement of her prayer would hardly satisfy her; nor would it justify Eli's declaration *go in peace*. The words should be rendered, *the God of Israel will grant thy petition*, thus giving Hannah a favorable oracle and assuring her that her prayers were not in vain (so Jastrow, *Journal Biblical Literature*, 1900, p. 85) *cf.* on v. 23.

18. **Let . . . find.** Better in harmony with note on v. 17 *thy servant finds*. Hannah is satisfied and expresses her confidence because a favorable response has been given by the priest; she does not request further favors. **And did eat** implies that she returned to the sacrificial meal which she had abandoned on account of her distress of spirit. G. amplifies and brings out the meaning clearly: **and she went to her lodging and ate and drank with her husband**. *Sad* is not in the Heb. either expressed or implied, though G. suggests some such word. The marks of Hannah's sorrow were her refusal to eat and her tears. At this point the conditions are changed and she ate; therefore we should expect, *and her tears were shed no more*. **Countenance** may be an error for *weeping*.

29-23a. Hannah gives birth to a son.

19. **The Lord remembered her**, referring to the terms of her vow, v. 11. The conception was attributed to Jahveh's accepting the terms of the vow by granting the request of the supplicant.

20. The clauses are disarranged in Heb., but order results by omitting *and Hannah conceived*, or transposing to the end of v. 19 as most Greek texts. **The time was come about**, literally *at the circuit of the year*, i. e., Samuel was born a year after Hannah offered her prayer.

21. LORD. And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice,
22. and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear
23. before the LORD, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman tarried and

**Called his name Samuel.** Much has been written about the etymology of this name, and all writers assume that the clause **because I have asked him of Jahveh** is an explanation of the meaning of the name. Now the name of Samuel does contain the name for God, *El*, but it does not contain the name *Jahveh*, and that is what Hannah employs. Hannah says she named the boy Samuel because she asked him from *Jahveh*, but she does not necessarily imply that the name means *asked of Jahveh*; and it certainly has no such meaning. As a matter of fact *Samuel* contains neither the word for *ask* nor the name *Jahveh*. *Samuel* means either *name of God*, or possibly as Jastrow holds *offspring of God* (*J. B. L.* 1900, 103). The passage is then explicable. The pious mother names her first born *child of God*, because he was given in answer to her prayers, and therefore was entitled to be called God's offspring. The name as well as the career of this prophet has therefore a Messianic significance. To be consistent and grammatical the text should be *because she asked him of Jahveh*.

21. **And his vow.** This seems to be a later interpolation. Elkanah had made no vow, and offer is not the proper verb, but *pay*, or *fulfil*. The adding of ceremonial observance is carried still further in G which adds: *and all the tithe of his land*.

22. Hannah shows her fine character in refraining from appearing at the sanctuary until she was in a position to fulfil her part of the vow. Forever, i. e., for his lifetime, as v. 28 shows.

23. **Only the Lord established his word.** If the text is right, these words may refer to some divine promise of which there is no mention in the preceding passage, for there is not even an implication of any promise on the part of God. Therefore many scholars emend after G. *thy word*, making Elkanah pray that *Jahveh* would see that Hannah kept her promise to dedicate the child to the Lord. It may be that we should render, *surely Jahveh will establish his word*, and interpret that *Jahveh* will be able to accomplish his end, the securing



24. gave her son suck, until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three<sup>1</sup> bullocks, and one ephah of meal, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slew the bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here,<sup>2</sup> praying unto the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: therefore

<sup>1</sup> Or better, *a bullock three years old*, cf. v. 25 the bullock.

<sup>2</sup> Or, *to pray*.

of the child without the necessity for Hannah's appearing at the sanctuary in the meantime. The expression is certainly meant to justify Elkanah's approval of Hannah's course in staying away from Shiloh until she can fulfil her vow.

23b-28 : 11 Hannah gives her son to God.

In this section Hannah acts quite by herself. In the original text, as shown in the notes, Elkanah is not mentioned at all, and there is no reason to assume that the presentation of Samuel was made on the occasion of the annual sacrifice. Indeed as it is said that Hannah took the boy to Shiloh as soon as she had weaned him, it would be a singular coincidence if this occurred at the period of the feast. Hannah had made the vow on her own responsibility, and now she discharges her obligation without even the presence of her husband.

24f. **When she had weaned him.** Hebrew women suckled their children for three years or longer. Samuel may have been five or six years old when he was left at Shiloh. At a much earlier age he would have been a great care to Eli. **The child was young** is impossible. The words must be rendered, *the child was a child*, and that is too obvious to require a record. From G. we can get *and the child was with her*, and that is usually adopted, but the information is highly superfluous. It is best to amend 25b and transpose the clause so that we get, *and the mother of the lad went in to Eli having the lad with her*. The first course was to offer the suitable sacrifices outside of the temple; the second was to seek the priest in the temple and to present to him her first-born. **They slew**, i. e., the attendants at the temple.

28. **I have granted him.** There is much playing on the word *ask*, which is not brought out in the English. **Granted** is a doubtful ren-

I also have granted him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he is granted to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

*Hannah's Prayer, 2 : 1-10*

1. And Hannah prayed, and said:  
 My heart exulteth in the LORD,  
 Mine horn is exalted in <sup>1</sup> the LORD:

<sup>1</sup> G. better *my God*.

dering as the meaning would most naturally be *I have caused him to ask*, but that makes no sense. Moreover, Hannah had asked a son of Jahveh, but Jahveh had not asked anything of her, and yet we find *granted* or *A. V. lent*, twice in this verse. Jastrow connects the word *ask* with the oracular inquiry, and therefore Hannah would say, *I have made him an oracle-giver for Jahveh*, i. e., a priest or prophet (*J. B. L.*, 1900, 99 f.). **He worshipped.** The subject would be Samuel, though our text may think of Elkanah. It is best to read with G., **and she left him there with Jahveh**, and there we have a suitable connection with the conclusion in 2 : 11.

The idea of the compiler is that Hannah composed this prayer after the birth and dedication of Samuel. The poem is, however, so inappropriate that we cannot suppose the words were spoken by her or that the real author had her case in his mind. The G. text lacks the words *and Hannah prayed*, and it inserts the song at a slightly different place, i. e., before the last clause of 1 : 28. The grounds for its insertion here is the phrase in v. 5; but Hannah had not borne seven, and there is no reason to suppose that Peninnah had become barren. Moreover these words are part of an elaborate statement of instances of which Jahveh reverses present conditions. The use of the term *king* in v. 10 is evidence that the poem was written after the establishment of the monarchy. It is true that Cheyne regards *rob* as an addition to make a proper liturgical close to the song, but his contention lacks adequate evidence. He regards the poem as coming from the early post-exile period (*Bamp. Lect.*, p. 57).

The poem is composed on the model of the Psalms and might well be in that collection. It expresses the exultation of the nation because of some great triumph over an enemy that was more powerful than itself. The theme of the song is the unbounded power of God, who can save by many or by few. There is an interesting sub-



My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies;  
Because I rejoice in thy salvation.

2. There is none holy as the LORD;  
For there is none beside thee:  
Neither is there any rock like our God.
3. Talk no more so exceeding proudly;

secondary subject which is worked out most elaborately, and that is the revolution by which God reverses existing conditions. This theme finds expression in the Magnificat (Lk. 1 : 46 ff.) and still more strikingly in the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Lk. 16 : 19 ff.). This teaching undoubtedly springs from the national experience which gave occasion to the poem. The nation of Israel had been brought low and its enemy had trampled upon it ruthlessly. Then Jahveh intervened, and Israel's horn was raised high, while the foe was trampled in the dust. Historical situations like that may be found in nearly all periods from the time of "the judges" to that of the Maccabees.

1. **Mine horn.** The horn was characteristic of the mighty and aggressive animals and is used as a symbol of strength. **Is exalted**, lit. *is high*; the picture is drawn from the animal which in the moment of triumph raises aloft its horned head. **My mouth is enlarged**, i. e., is opened wide. This may indicate *scorn* as Ps. 35 : 21; Is. 57 : 4 (so Budde, Driver); or the mouth may be open to swallow the enemy as Ps. 81 : 10; Is. 5 : 14. **Salvation** is rather too religious a word for this place, *rescue* or *deliverance* is better. This line expresses the theme of the poem, joy over Jahveh's deliverance.

2. The second line is incomplete and it is well to supply an adjective from G.: *there is none righteous beside thee*; or even better transpose clauses as G does thus: *there is none righteous as our God. There is none holy beside thee.* **Rock** is often used as a figure for God, Deut. 32 : 4, 15, 18, 37; Ps. 18 : 31; Is. 30 : 29. The lasting, immovable quality of the rock, or the rocky heights as a safe refuge, gave rise to the figure. The parallelism which is a characteristic of Heb. poetry is improved by substituting the adjective.

3. The first line is intolerably prosaic, more so in the original than in the English. It has been expanded by accidental repetition and probably we should omit **exceeding**. The real force of the line is this: *do not multiply proud boastings.* The enemy is addressed and in view of the downfall brought upon him by Jahveh, his arrogant utterances will be heard no longer. *Knowledge* is plural in the Heb. to emphasize the largeness of the divine attribute. God knows what man does, and knows how to do different things himself. As the

- Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth:  
 For the LORD is a God of knowledge,  
<sup>1</sup> And by him actions are weighed.
4. The bows of the mighty men are broken,  
 And they that stumbled are girded with strength.
5. They that were full have hired out themselves for  
 bread;  
 And they that were hungry have ceased:  
 Yea, the barren hath borne seven;  
 And she that hath many children languisheth.
6. The LORD killeth, and maketh alive:  
 He bringeth down to <sup>2</sup> the grave, and bringeth up.
7. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich:  
 He bringeth low, he also lifteth up.
8. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,  
 He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill,  
 To make them sit with princes,

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<sup>1</sup> G. and God makes ready his affairs.

<sup>2</sup> Or better, *sheol*.

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latter idea is emphasized in the song, the Gk. rendering of the next line is preferable.

4. **They that stumbled**, i. e., through weakness, in contrast with *mighty men* not because of rough paths *cf.* Ps. 109 : 24. This is the beginning of the reversals of fortune which characterize the poem.

5. A clause is misplaced in the English Version and the line must be rendered, *they that were sated with bread are working for wages*. Smith follows G. and emends the verb to *do lack*, and in the next line for *have ceased* which is very abrupt, reads, *inherit the land*, thus sharpening the antithesis. **Languisheth**. This line is very like Jer. 15 : 9, but is not necessarily later.

6. The two lines present a case of synonymous parallelism. Those that are brought to life are obviously not the ones that have been killed; therefore the ones that are brought up from Sheol, are not those that have gone down. As man is conceived as coming originally from the dust, Gen. 3 : 19, the expression is natural.

8. **Dunghill**, or refuse heap, which was found outside of every

And inherit the throne of glory:  
 For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S,  
 And he hath set the world upon them.

9. He will keep the feet of his holy ones,  
 But the wicked shall be put to silence in darkness;  
 For by strength shall no man prevail.
10. They that strive with the LORD shall be broken to  
 pieces;  
 Against them shall be thunder in heaven:  
 The LORD shall judge the ends of the earth;  
 And he shall give strength unto his king,  
 And exalt the horn of his anointed.
11. And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the  
 child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

town, and upon which those who had no other shelter would sleep, Lam. 4 : 5. The whole line is found in Ps. 113 : 7. The last two lines of this verse are regarded by many as a later addition. The reference to God as the creator of the world fits in poorly in a passage descriptive of his gracious acts towards man. G. has a very different text, thus adding to our suspicion. The text of G. is, however, designed evidently to make the poem more appropriate to Hannah, reading: *granting the vow to the vower, and he blesses the years of the righteous.*

9. **In darkness** refers to the condition in Sheol, for **put to silence** means *slain*, cf. Ps. 31 : 17; Jer. 49 : 26. G. lacks the first two lines of this verse.

10. **They that strive with the Lord** are the foes of Israel. To attack the people of God is to attack God himself. **Thunder.** God's power is often manifested in the storm, and that is one of the common agencies by which the enemy is vanquished, Josh. 10 : 11. In this verse there is in G. an insertion of six lines from Jer. 9 : 23 f. to the effect that one should glory neither in wisdom, might, nor wealth, but in understanding and in the knowledge of the Lord. It is difficult to see why the passage was transferred to this place.

11. It is better with most modern authorities to connect this passage with 1 : 28b as we have here the completion of the story of the presentation. It is best to follow text of G. thus: *And she left him here before the Lord, and went to Ramah.* This makes a better introduction to v. 11b, and recognizes Hannah's preëminence in the story

(2) *The wickedness of the House of Eli*, 2 : 12-36

12. Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew  
 13. not the LORD. And the custom of the priests with the  
 people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the  
 priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething,  
 14. with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; and he  
 struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot;  
 all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Better with G. *for himself*.

of Samuel's infancy. The original connection is broken by the insertion of Hannah's song.

Two strands are woven together in this section, one dealing with Samuel, vs. 18-21, 26; and the other dealing with the house of Eli, vs. 12-17, 22-25, 27-36. Samuel rises in favor while the house of Eli degenerates, a reversal of condition such as was emphasized in Hannah's song. As Samuel passes from infancy to an age when he won the favor of men, v. 26, a considerable period of time is assumed.

12-17. Two abuses are described, taking flesh from the pot, 12-14, and demanding it raw, 15 f.

12. The passage in 1 : 3, which does not belong where it stands, would fit in well here as an introduction: *The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of Jehovah; and the sons of Eli were sons of Belial*. As Eli is several years older than in ch. 1 his sons now take a part of his functions. On Belial, cf. note on 1 : 16. **They did not know Jahveh.** This is equivalent to the more common phrase *to fear Jahveh*. To *know* is conceived as having an ethical import. The priests knew a good deal about Jahveh's requirements, but they did not put their knowledge into practice.

13 f. **The custom of the priests.** As our text stands this serves as an introduction to the description of the two priestly abuses in connection with sacrifices. But *Mishpat* never means a wrong custom; and in Dt. 18: 3 we have essentially the same phrase where it has clearly the meaning the *right* of the priests. Therefore with several scholars we must connect with v. 12 thus: *they did not know* [i. e., *respect*] *Jahveh or the right of the priests from the people*. The first abuse is described in v. 13 f. The wrong consisted of thrusting a three pronged instrument into the vessel in which a sacrificial animal was boiling, and appropriating for the priest whatever could be thus harpooned. The later law in the Priest Code prescribed that the priest should have the breast and shoulder of all animals sacrificed, Lev. 7 : 23 ff.

therewith. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites  
 15. that came thither.<sup>1</sup> Yea, before they burnt the fat, the  
 priest's servant came, and said to the man that  
 sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will  
 16. not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. And if the man  
 said unto him, They will surely burn the fat presently,  
 and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he  
 would say, Nay, but thou shalt give it me now: and  
 17. if not, I will take it by force. And the sin of the young  
 men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred  
 the offering of the LORD.

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<sup>1</sup> G. to sacrifice to Jahveh.

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What the law was at this time is unknown, but it is evident that some fixed portion was the priest's right, and that he was trying to get a larger or better portion than his customary due. The four names indicate that the flesh was boiled in any sort of a vessel which the sacrificer could procure. **The priest's servant.** The same term is applied in v. 17 to the sinners, *young men*. Either the same word is used in two senses, referring in v. 17 to Hophni and Phinehas, or we should render and *the priest's son*, priest referring to Eli. In that case in v. 15 the son pretends that he wants the uncooked meat for Eli.

15 f. **Yea**; better, *also*, or *again*, as the word introduces the second abuse. The passage is difficult, for the priests at first demand raw flesh for roasting instead of the boiled meat described above. Then when the worshipper offers to give the meat as soon as the fat is burned, the priests refuse to wait. It is not improbable that in the early days before the priests' dues were regulated by law there was sometimes a difference of opinion between the priest and the worshipper. The worshipper might strive to retain as much as possible in view of the evident greed of the priests, and the latter may have endeavored to make sure of a liberal and choice portion by seizing it as soon as the animal was slain. The early law prescribed that the fat should be consumed before the morning after the feast, Ex. 23: 18. It was evidently regarded as vital here that the fat be burned before the other meat was eaten. **As thy soul desireth** perhaps indicates that the portion belonging to the priest was not exactly determined; or the phrase may mean according to your demands.

18. But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child,  
 19. girded with a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little robe, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the  
 20. yearly sacrifice. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which was lent to the LORD. And they  
 21. went unto their own home. And the LORD visited Hannah,<sup>1</sup> and she conceived,<sup>1</sup> and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew<sup>2</sup> before the LORD.

<sup>1</sup> Lacking in G. rightly.<sup>2</sup> Or *with*.

18. 18-21. **Eli blesses Samuel's parents. Ministered.** The phrase is repeated from v. 11, necessarily after the insertion of the section about Eli's sons; so in 3 : 1. **Being a child** indicates his age, but it is more accurate to render, *a child girded with a linen ephod*, as the meaning is that he was already performing certain functions at the temple. **The linen ephod** was the essential vestment of the priest, though it was no part of his clothing. 22 : 18. Ephod in earlier use was an image to be worshipped (Judg. 8 : 27, 17 : 46, and see article by Foote, *J. B. L.* XXI).

19. **A little robe.** *Little*, because Samuel was still a young boy. The robe was the long outer garment worn over the tunic and whose wearing indicated a person of social distinction.

20. Eli's act implies his high regard for the young disciple who had been so wonderfully brought to him. **Loan.** Here we have the play on the work for *ask* which was so puzzling in 1 : 27. The word can hardly mean *loan*; the proper sense is *request*, but that makes poor sense. Jastrow accepts an amended text and renders: *in place of what has been asked for, which is devoted to Jahveh* (*J. B. L.* 1900, 101). That gives the correct idea, for Samuel was not loaned, but surrendered absolutely.

21. *Visited* here means to confer a divine favor. The word means strictly *to pay attention to*, and then to take such action as may be needed, whether favorable or otherwise.

*Grew*, or more definitely *grew up*, as the word implies an advance in years, cf. Gen. 21 : 20. *Before the Lord*, i. e., in faithful service to the Lord in the temple at Shiloh.



22. Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, and how that they lay with the women that did service at the door of the tent of meeting. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings from all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, God shall judge him:

22. The first part of the verse plainly refers to the abuses described in vs. 12-17. The rest mentions a vice not referred to elsewhere. There is no evidence in early sources of women serving in the temple. The word for serve is used in this sense only by late writers. The late term *tent of meeting* replaces *temple*. The passage is lacking in the Vatican text of G. These facts justify the belief that the passage is interpolated by a later hand which desired to magnify the sins of Eli's sons.

23. G. has a better text *why do ye such things as I hear from every mouth of the Lord's people?* *Evil dealings* needlessly anticipates v. 24. Evidently the worshippers whose privileges had been abused by Hophni and Phinehas had complained to Eli of their rapacity.

24. **Ye make transgress.** This rendering is quite impossible, and there was no hint that the priests had led the people to sin. Driver translates: *which I hear Jehovah's people to be spreading*, so Budde and Nowack; but that adds nothing to what was already said, and implies that Eli's chief concern was the bad reputation his sons were acquiring. From v. 25 it appears that he is here charging his sons with an offense against Jahveh. The Lucian text of G. may be rendered: *do not prevent the people from serving Jahveh*, and that gives us what the context demands.

25. **God shall judge him.** The correct rendering is probably, *the judges will intervene* as Ex. 22 : 8. But the judge is the mouthpiece of God and so his decision has divine authority. Just because he stands in the place of God, the judge occupies a point of vantage over the litigants; but if one offend God, there is no superior power to which appeal may be made to stay punishment. **The Lord would slay them**, or more accurately *was pleased to slay them*. Therefore Eli's appeal must needs be in vain. This conception of God's influence upon man is frequent in the O. T., note hardening of Pharaoh's heart; the tempting of David to make the fatal census, 2 Sam. 24. (See my *Good and Evil*, Lect. I.) In the case before us there is no implication that Jahveh led the priests into sin in order to have a

- but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would
26. slay them. And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.
27. And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I reveal myself unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt
28. *bondage* to Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up

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case against them, but only that he prevented their heeding their father's plea for reformation. Perhaps this conception underlies the petition in the Lord's Prayer, *Lead us not into temptation*. In the later theology this office was associated with Satan, cf. 2 Sam. 24 : 1 and 1 Chr. 21 : 1, Mt. 4 : 1.

26. Obscure as this verse is in the original, it clearly represents a stage in Samuel's development between that described in v. 21 and that of ch. 3. The passage is inserted here to point a contrast: the sons of Eli had attained bad repute among men, and were regarded as quite hopeless in the eyes of God: while Samuel as he grew up won a good name both with God and with men.

27-36. The prediction of the overthrow of Eli's house. This section has all the marks of a late addition. The style is Deuteronomic; and some of the phrases are quite late. The definite prediction of the death of Eli's sons in one day raises a doubt; and their death is to be a sign to Eli, but Eli died directly after their fall. The passage betrays knowledge of the rise of Zadok and the fall of Abiathar in the time of Solomon. The conception of the Aaronic priesthood is much later than the time of Eli. Moreover, the reproach made against Eli ignores his rebuke of his sons. Finally, the prediction of the collapse of Eli's house is more naturally told in the story of Samuel proper ch. 3.

27. With G. it is better to understand vv. 27, 28 as a declaration, not as a series of questions, *I revealed myself, etc.* **Man of God** is often applied to a prophet whose name is not known, 1 Ki. 13 : 1; and sometimes is applied to a celestial being, Judg. 13 : 6, 8; the term covers any one who carries the message of God. **In bondage** is found in G. and is surely correct.

28. **To be my priest.** The reference is to Aaron, and as Aaron is called Eli's father the implication is that Eli is a Levite. There is



unto mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings of the children of Israel made  
 29. by fire? <sup>1</sup> Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in *my* habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of  
 30. Israel <sup>2</sup> my people? Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise  
 31. me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in

<sup>1</sup> G. adds: *for food.*<sup>2</sup> G.: *before me.*

nothing known about Eli's forbears. To wear an ephod is dubious; the correct translation is *to bear an ephod*. The ephod was a part of the priestly paraphernalia. But it was also some implement used in divination, which was used by the priests, *cf.* 14 : 3, 18; 23 : 9 f., 30 : 7 f. The latter appears to be the meaning here.

29. The word rendered **kick** occurs elsewhere only in Deut. 32 : 15 where it has a literal and appropriate sense. Here it might pass as American slang, but the Hebrews were not American. It is better to follow G. and read as Smith; *why dost thou look with an evil [or greedy] eye on my sacrifices?* This change absorbs *in my habitation*, an interpretative rendering of a doubtful word. **Honourest thy sons.** The change to the singular shows a rebuke of Eli alone, in distinction from his house. The reproach ignores the futile effort of the aged priest to reform his sons, v. 22-25.

30. The words show the implied condition in God's promises. The continuance of this house in the priesthood depended upon their faithful discharge of their obligations.

31. **Arm.** Smith follows G. and reads *seed*= *posterity*. Arm signifies *power*, and if we retain that reading the prediction would be that the family of Eli will be weakened, so that none shall reach a good old age.

32. thine house. And thou shalt behold the affliction of *my* habitation, in all the wealth which *God* shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine
33. house for ever. And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut off from mine altar, *shall be* to consume thine <sup>1</sup> eyes, and to grieve <sup>1</sup> thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die <sup>2</sup> in the flower of their age.
34. And this shall be the sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one
35. day they shall die both of them. And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine
36. anointed for ever. And it shall come to pass, that

<sup>1</sup> G. *his*.<sup>2</sup> Read after G. *by the sword of men*.

32. The text is corrupt and difficult. A part is lacking in the Vatican text of G. *My habitation* is surely wrong. The idea may be: *thou shalt see distress in thy habitation in all the good that shall befall Israel*. While the nation shall prosper, the house of Eli will suffer acute distress. The second part of the verse is a needless repetition of v. 31b. The same idea is stated again in other words in v. 33b.

33. The one member of the house of Eli who shall not be cut off must be Abiathar, the sole survivor of the massacre of the priests of Nob (ch. 22) and who became the companion and counsellor of David in his years of struggle. It is better to follow G. and read *his* for *thine*, the reference then being to Abiathar's deposition and banishment by Solomon because he took part in the rebellion of Adonijah, 1 Kings 2 : 26 f.

34. This prediction was quickly fulfilled, 4 : 11; but as Eli died immediately afterwards, the sign meant little to him.

35. **A faithful priest.** This refers to Zadok who was raised to the priesthood by Solomon in place of the banished Abiathar, 1 Chr. 29 : 22. The reference cannot be to Samuel, as the older writers supposed (e. g., *Camb. Bible*), for the promise following exactly fits Zadok, and cannot apply to Samuel. The house of Zadok retained the priesthood before kings down to the captivity.

36. This description shows the conditions following Josiah's re-

every one that is left in thine house shall come and bow down to him for a <sup>1</sup> piece of silver and a loaf of bread, and shall say, <sup>2</sup> Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a morsel of bread.

(3) *The Call of Samuel to be a Prophet*, 3 : 1-4 : 1a

3. And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious <sup>3</sup>  
2. in those days; there was no open vision. And it came

<sup>1</sup> Better, *payment*.

<sup>2</sup> Or, *attach me to one of priests' offices*.

<sup>3</sup> Or, *rare*.

forms, when the priests of the sanctuaries scattered through the country were brought to Jerusalem, where they were deemed an inferior order, and picked up their living at the temple as best they could, 2 Kings, 23 : 9, Ezek. 44 : 10 ff.

Ch. 3. With Budde we may hold that originally this chapter described the call of Samuel. The way is prepared in the beautiful and primitive story of a revelation in a vision of the night, but the revelation as we have it is nothing but a denunciation of Eli and a prediction of the downfall of his house, and this can hardly be original. Evidently there has been a substitution of material, and the original call of Samuel is lost. To this have been added statements to account for Samuel's preëminence as he was viewed in one section of this book. The purpose of the compiler is clearly disclosed in the amplified text with which the passage ends in G., for v. 21 runs thus: *and the Lord appeared again in Shiloh, for the Lord was revealed to Samuel. And Samuel was established to be a prophet for the Lord to all Israel, from one end of the land to the other. And Eli was exceedingly old, and his two sons continued their course, and their way was evil before the Lord.*

1. Cf. 2 : 11, 18. **Word of the Lord** is used here in a technical sense, cf., v. 21, where it seems to refer to a method of revelation, an interpretation supported by the parallel term *vision*. The point is that Jahveh had not at the time been appearing in a visible form, though prophets had spoken in his name, 2 : 27 ff. **Precious**, or rather *rare*. The parallel shows that the word of Jahveh in this form was so scarce that it was really non-existent. **Open** is vague. The word really means *break* or *burst out*. The text is suspected by many, but the meaning may be that man's sleep was not wont to be broken in upon by visions from the Lord.

2. **He could not see**, another mark of Eli's old age, of which we

- to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, that he
3. could not see), and the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*, in the temple<sup>1</sup> of the LORD, where the ark of God was;
  4. that the LORD called<sup>2</sup> Samuel: and he said, Here
  5. am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down
  6. again. And he went and lay down. And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me.

<sup>1</sup> Omit with G.<sup>2</sup> G. *Samuel, Samuel.*

find frequent mention. Because of his poor sight Samuel was now performing duty as the guardian of the ark at night. Eli's sons do not figure in this passage.

3. **Lamp of God;** the lamp was sacred, and was kept burning at night that there might be a beacon for Jahveh in his temple. It would appear that just enough oil was used to last through the night, and that the reference here shows that the call came shortly before dawn. Therefore we should render the next clause, *and Samuel was sleeping in the temple*, for R. V. implies that Samuel had just lain down when he heard the voice. The fact that the ark of God was in the room where Samuel slept shows that he slept in the temple itself. Eli must have been near by, presumably in one of the rooms which adjoined the sanctuary proper.

4. It is better to read with G. *and Jahveh called, Samuel, Samuel;* and the name should be repeated in v. 6. The name is repeated for emphasis, so Gen. 22:11. Curiously the Hebrew has the repeated name only in v. 10, where it is not required at all after *as at other times*. **Here am I** is the regular acknowledgment of a call by name in Hebrew like our "here" at roll-call. Samuel says it first immediately upon hearing the voice, and again after he reached Eli's presence.

5. **For thou calledst me.** These words have no place here, but may have been put here for the sake of uniformity in the boy's remarks to Eli; or Samuel may have found Eli asleep and waked him up, giving this remark as the reason for disturbing him. Samuel evidently was asleep each time he heard the voice, hence it was easy to identify it with the voice of his chief. Eli may have called Samuel at night on various occasions.

And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down  
 7. again. Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD,  
 neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto  
 8. him. And the LORD called Samuel again the third  
 time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am  
 I; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that the  
 9. LORD had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto  
 Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee,  
 that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant  
 heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.  
 10. And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other  
 times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak;  
 11. for thy servant heareth. And the LORD said to Samuel,  
 Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the  
 12. ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that

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7. These statements show that this was Samuel's inaugural vision, *cf.* Is. 6. Because Samuel had had as yet no personal association with Jahveh he did not recognize the voice. The power to prophesy had not yet been given him, therefore he could not realize what person was calling.

8. **And Eli perceived.** The blind priest recognizes the source of the call by inference. People used to go to sleep at a sacred place hoping that the proximity to the deity would insure a revelation, *cf.* Solomon's visit to Gibeon, 1 Kings 3. As Samuel slept by the sacred ark he was in a favorable position for a message from God. At the first or even second call Eli may have deemed it an ordinary dream, but persistence to the third call convinces him that Jahveh has a message for his servant.

9. Eli now instructs Samuel what to do in order to secure the revelation. First, he must resume his sleep; and second, instead of rousing up, he must answer by a certain formula. In this formula, *Jahveh* should be omitted as G. and in agreement with v. 10.

10. **And stood.** The voice implies a presence, and here it is distinctly stated that Jahveh appeared in physical form, otherwise there could be no speaking or standing.

12. As this statement seems to refer to the late passage 2: 27-36, it is by many regarded as an interpolation here. It is quite as likely

day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto  
 13. the end. For <sup>1</sup> I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity <sup>2</sup> which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and  
 14. he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.  
 15. And Samuel lay until the morning,<sup>3</sup> and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to  
 16. shew Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said,  
 17. Samuel, my son. And he said, Here am I. And he said, What is the thing that *the Lord* hath spoken

<sup>1</sup> Or, *thou shalt tell.*

<sup>2</sup> G. of his sons.

<sup>3</sup> Add with G. *and he arose in the morning.*

that the late passage may have been inserted to explain this verse. The words imply a series of threats which may have come to Eli from time to time in view of the wickedness of his sons.

13. **Did bring a curse upon themselves** is a translation which strains the text. In fact the construction in the Heb. is ungrammatical. The idea is not correctly brought out either, for we require a statement of the evil done by Eli's sons which justifies their punishment, whereas this rendering describes a penalty which has already come. By a very slight change we get the reading of G. *his sons cursed God*. This is not to be taken as an exaggerated interpretation of the actions of those young men, known to us from 2: 12 ff., but as a description of a fact otherwise unknown. The cursing of God was an unpardonable offense even in the olden times, 1 Kings, 21: 10, Job, 2: 9; hence no amount of sacrifice could wipe away this sin or avert its punishment, v. 14. **Restrained** is the rendering of a word which does not occur elsewhere, and we cannot be sure of the sense. **Restrained** contradicts 2: 23 ff. and is probably wrong. The point seems to be that Eli did not prevent his sons from blaspheming God.

15. **Opened the doors.** Samuel was really a temple servant, and had been doing the menial work at the temple up to this time, when God chose the servant rather than the master to receive his message. Note that the revelation is called frankly a *vision*.

17. **God do so to thee** introduces a form of imprecation found only



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- unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me
18. of all the things that he spake unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him
19. good. And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.
20. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the
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in Ruth, Samuel and Kings. The words were accompanied by some symbolical action, originally perhaps killing a sacrificial victim, but later rending a garment, breaking a stick, or something of that kind. The result would be that Samuel, who had been afraid to disclose the revelation of disaster, was now afraid to withhold it: naturally, being humane, he would prefer to hide the bad tidings, but the case becomes different when the person chiefly concerned demands the truth.

18. **It is the Lord** or *Jahveh*. This is the first time that Eli uses the name of Jahveh to Samuel. With fine tact he lets Samuel himself learn who spoke to him. Now that his submission is to be made, he must assert the fact that his submission is to the will of Jahveh. Eli was a noble character. Everything that we learn of him in these stories raises him highly in our esteem. In explaining the downfall of his house, evil is attributed to his sons, not to him. Samuel was destined to face a like condition.

19. **Grew** or *grew up* as in 2 : 21. The last part of our story brings Samuel to full manhood as he appears in the sequel in ch. 7. But a considerable period of time may be covered in growing up, and it is probable that Samuel was a young man at the time this vision came. The popular idea that he was a mere child has no support, for the term rendered *child* in v. 1 is as indefinite as our *boy*. **Fall to the ground** and so be wasted like untimely fruit. Samuel's predictions always were fulfilled, and that proved that he was a true prophet. The popular belief made a prophet a sharer of divine omniscience, and apparently enabled him to control the future so that what he said would surely come to pass. Cf. 1 Kings 17 : 1.

20. Dan and Beer-sheba were the towns which marked the remotest northern and southern points in the land of Israel. Samuel is represented here as attaining a reputation extending through the whole nation.

21. LORD. And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the  
 4. word of the LORD. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

2. *The Capture and Return of the Ark*, 4: 1b-7: 1

- Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines  
 2. pitched in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves

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21. **The Lord appeared.** The fact is the Lord had already appeared and the tautology is puzzling. Smith proposes an ingenious emendation, *and Israel appeared in Shiloh again*. The vicious oppression of the priests had driven the people away from the sanctuary, but now that divine revelations could be had again by a true prophet, the people from all parts of the land again frequented the temple at Shiloh. G. has an added clause, the most important statement being that Eli's sons continued their notoriously evil life. **Word of Jahveh**, cf. on v. 7

This section relates the beginning of the Philistine wars; but the campaign is only mentioned because it bears on the history of the ark, the ark being throughout the topic of supreme importance.

The passage shows a different source from cc. 1-3. Samuel is never mentioned once, and as he had been described as the national prophet, he certainly must have figured largely here as he does in the later wars. Moreover, even when the ark is taken to the front, this source knows only the sons of Eli, who had been denounced as hopelessly wicked as its warders in 1-3. The person of Samuel is quite unknown to this writer. On the other hand, such evidence as we have indicates an early and well informed author. The section belongs to the oldest strand of material in Samuel, like ch. 9. It has marked Jewish coloring in cc. 5 f., and has evidently been retouched here and there by late hands.

Israel is defeated in battle with the Philistines with disastrous results, 4: 1b-22.

1. In G. the story begins with an additional clause: *and it came to pass in those days that the Philistines gathered for war against Israel*. This text suggests an invasion, and consistently omits part of v. 8, while the Heb. indicates an uprising in Israel. The latter is right. Judah had long been subject to the Philistines, Judg. 15: 11; and v. 9 shows that the central part of the country was held in bondage at this time. Eben-ezer was the scene of two other battles with the



- in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew
3. of the army in the field about four thousand men. And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of <sup>1</sup> the covenant of the LORD <sup>1</sup> out of Shiloh unto us, that it may come among us, and save us out of the
  4. hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh, and they brought from thence the ark of <sup>2</sup> the covenant of the LORD of hosts,<sup>2</sup> which sitteth upon the cheru-

<sup>1</sup> Better *our God*.<sup>2</sup> Better *Jahveh* as in v. 6, so in v. 6, 5.

Philistines, 5 : 7 : 12, the name being explained by Samuel's victory. The place has not been identified, but as *Aphék* was probably on the border of the plain of Sharon, Eben-ezer must have been in the same neighborhood. From this position and the proximity of Shiloh it appears that Ephraim was the tribe mainly involved in this war.

2. **Four thousand men.** The large number killed, *cf.* v. 10, if indeed we can trust these figures, indicates that Israel had a big army in the field and that the battle had been a severely contested struggle.

3. **Into the camp.** The Israelites had retreated to their base at Eben-ezer. They evidently were not pursued by the Philistines, probably because the latter had been punished too severely. **The elders of Israel.** The government was not now in the hands of an individual as was reputed to be the case in the time of Moses and of Joshua and of the judges, but in a body probably comprising the clan leaders. **The Lord smitten us.** The enemy was probably superior in numbers and equipment, but Israel believed that adversity as well as prosperity came from their God. **Let us fetch the ark.** On the ark *cf.* Peters, *Religion of the Hebrews* (consult index), and Arnold, *Ephod and Ark*. This statement implies the answer to the question of the elders. The people were defeated because they had failed to take into their battle lines the sacred ark signifying the presence of Jahveh. The ark was regularly taken with the armies in war, *cf.* 2 Sam. 11 : 11. **Which sitteth upon the cherubin.** This phrase is interpolated by a later writer who drew upon the story of the temple of Solomon in which were two gigantic figures under whose wings the ark rested, 1 Kings 6 : 23 ff., 8 : 6 f. **There is better**

- bim: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.
5. And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so
  6. that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD
  7. was come into the camp. And the Philistines were

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omitted with G. as the point is that the sons of Eli came to the camp with the ark. This statement shows that this source knows nothing of Samuel, whose place as the guardian of the ark is here taken by Hophni and Phinehas.

5. **All Israel shouted**, for the presence of the ark was an assurance of victory. **The earth rang again**, or better, *resounded*, or *reëchoed*, from the noise of the tumult. There was a large body of troops shouting, and their piercing cries were easily heard in the Philistine camp which must have been a considerable distance away. The predicate in this form occurs but twice elsewhere, see 1:19, 1 Kings 1:45, in both cases with "city" as subject, the meaning being that the city was astir.

6. **The Hebrews**. So the Israelites are called by the Egyptians and the Philistines, but they rarely apply the term to themselves. The word means *those from beyond*, referring probably to the Jordan, from the east side of which most of the Hebrews entered Canaan. **Understood**, or better *ascertained*. An interval must be presupposed after the question of the Philistines, during which scouts were sent out to learn what had caused such great excitement in the camp of the enemy. The remarks of the Philistines reveal a marked Jewish coloring.

7. **Afraid**. All these peoples were intensely religious, and they were especially strong in their belief in the power of any gods to work disaster. The tales they had heard of the havoc wrought by the God of Israel (v. 8) predisposed them to fright as they learned of his presence in the army of Israel. They identify the ark with God. After **woe unto us**, the G. has an interesting addition, which strangely was not noticed by Driver, viz: *deliver us O Lord, this day*. The Philistines prayed to their god against the God of the enemy. **Heretofore** the Philistines had often fought Israelites, but the latter had never employed the ark before this occasion.

afraid, for they said,<sup>1</sup> God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been  
 8. such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty<sup>2</sup> gods? these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all  
 9. manner of plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men,<sup>3</sup> O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to  
 10. you: quit yourselves like men,<sup>3</sup> and fight. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man to his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand  
 11. footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the

<sup>1</sup> G. *these gods*.    <sup>2</sup> So G. the Heb. has *majestic*.    <sup>3</sup> Lacking in some texts of G.

8. **The gods.** The Hebrew word for God is plural, a fact of which no satisfactory explanation is known. The Philistines apparently know the word without knowing the Hebrew usage. In v. 7 also the word is construed as a plural in the G., as consistency requires. The *wilderness* was not the scene of Egypt's discomfiture. Wellh. emended to read *and with pestilence*.

9. The Hebrew text asserts that the Israelites had already been subjugated by the Philistines, and if we may trust the Samson stories as historical sources, some of the tribes, especially Judah, had long felt this iron hand. It appears that the Joseph clans, in the hill country of Ephraim, had been reduced to subjection also. The exhortation was the appeal of the leaders to the men in the ranks.

10. **To his tent.** In the previous battle the Hebrews were beaten, but the whole body retreated to their common camp: in this contest the defeat was much more decisive, though *thirty thousand* slain may be an exaggeration, and the routed troops scattered, each survivor going to his own home so that for the time being the Hebrew army ceased to exist. **Footmen**, cf. v. 2, where the general term *men* is used. There can scarcely be any special force in the word here, for other kinds of troops did not exist in this period.

11. **The ark of God was taken.** The capture of the ark was the crowning triumph to the Philistines. In modern wars—at least up to very recent days in which the character of war has completely changed—supreme satisfaction is taken in the capture of flags be-

two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.  
 12. And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and  
 came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent,  
 13. and with earth upon his head. And when he came, lo,  
 Eli <sup>1</sup> sat upon his seat by the way side watching: for  
 his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the  
 man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried

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<sup>1</sup> Better, *was sitting*.

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cause of their symbolic meaning. Much more significant was the taking of the ark, for it indicated the superiority of the Philistine deity, since, in effect, the God of Israel was a prisoner. **Were slain** literally, *died*, cf. **are dead** v. 17, where Hebrew word is the same; but it is evident that the sons of Eli did not die a natural death. They were the bearers and guardians of the ark and presumably fell in its defense. The prediction of the man of God, 2: 34, is thought by many to be based upon this story. In this passage there is no hint that the sons of Eli met a fate that was justly due, and in fulfilment of predictions.

The death of Eli, 4: 12-18.

12. **A man of Benjamin.** In the days before the telegraph, and in an army were there where no horsemen, the news was carried by the fleetest runners, 2 Sam. 18: 19. **The same day.** The distance was possibly a dozen miles, so that Shiloh would be reached by a good runner in a couple of hours. The torn garments and the head covered with earth were common signs of mourning or disaster, Josh. 7: 6, 2 Sam. 1: 2, Neh. 9: 1. The people at Shiloh therefore would know that Israel had been defeated as soon as they saw the runner in the distance.

13. **By the way side.** The text is so corrupt that it can scarcely be translated. G. has a clearer text, *Eli was on the seat by the gate watching the road*. In both texts Eli's blindness is ignored. Yet the position described is natural. Eli was anxious about the ark. Probably he had opposed its going into the hopeless struggle. He would be concerned to hear the first tidings from the front, and thus took his place so that a messenger could not pass by unnoticed, for the blind priest could at least watch with his ears. **And told it**, is not very good English, as "it" has no antecedent. The passage should be translated, *now the man had come to the city to spread the news*. The phrase repeats v. 12 in part to explain that when he told the tale of disaster the people burst out into a cry of distress. This cry first informed the blind Eli that something serious had happened.

14. out. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said,<sup>1</sup> What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And
15. the man hasted, and came and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were set, that
16. he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, How went the matter, my
17. son? And he that brought the tidings answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and
18. the ark of God is taken. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds to the men who stood by him.

14. The seer proceeds at once to ascertain the cause of the uproar. The messenger was brought to him at his request. Crying and tumult are contrasted. The former refers to the shrieks of the unhappy people; the latter refers to the general state of disorder which broke out in the city.

*Cf.* 3: 2. This description of Eli has no point here, but it would come in very well with v. 18. His age and infirmity explain the manner of his death.

16. **Army.** Read with G. *camp*. In the second use of the word, the sense is *the line of battle*, a body of troops drawn up for action. The messenger was one who had actually been in the fight. **Fled.** In v. 12 the verb *ran* was used. The more specific term is happy here as the runner confesses that he was one of the fugitives who was flying to his home, v. 10.

17. The report of the fugitive is made up almost verbatim from the description of the catastrophe in v. 10 ff. He says nothing of the number who had fallen, because that could not have been known till later.

18. **The ark of God.** Eli was not so much affected by the story of the usual happenings in battle, the terrible slaughter of the Israelites, or even by the death of his sons, but the loss of the ark robbed the temple of Shiloh of its chief element of influence, and the people of their glory. For the priest was as superstitious as the Philistines, and felt that without the ark there could hardly be any God.



- his seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy.
19. And he had judged Israel<sup>1</sup> forty years. And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and
20. brought forth; for her pains came upon her.<sup>2</sup> And about the time of her death<sup>2</sup> the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast brought forth a son. But she answered not, neither did she

<sup>1</sup> G. *twenty*.<sup>2</sup> G. *and in her crisis she died*.

**By the side of the gate** is generally misunderstood and so mistranslated. Most scholars assume a corruption of the text, but that is unnecessary. *Yadh* does mean *hand* or *side*, but it also has the sense of *support*, and so here the *post*. The sense then is, *Eli fell off his seat backward away from the gate post*. Naturally the priest had been leaning against the gate post. As he collapsed from the shock, he slipped from the post and so went over backwards, and broke his neck. **Heavy** does not necessarily imply that Eli was corpulent, but only that he lacked suppleness on account of his years. We have a better introduction to the clause following if we render, as is surely possible: *the man was an elder and honorable, and he had judged Israel forty years*.

The death of Eli's daughter 4 : 19-22.

19. **Near to be delivered.** The whole phrase is condensed and obscure in the original. The literal sense is: *pregnant to bring forth*. Since the heavy tidings brought on premature travail and yet the boy was born alive, the above rendering must be correct in sense. The Hebrew idiom would be preserved better, however, by a phrase like: *was in the late stage of pregnancy*.

20. **About the time of her death.** This text assumes that the travelling woman died as a matter of course. G. is better as we need a specific statement of the death as that is the main idea. The passage would be more consistent if we substituted *delivery* for *death*. **Fear not.** The attending women did not know that their patient was already dead; but they must have realized her extremity as they tried to arouse her by the good news, not only that the trial

21. regard it.<sup>1</sup> And she named the child Ichabod, saying,  
The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of  
God was taken, and because of her father in law and  
22. her husband.<sup>1</sup> And <sup>2</sup> she said, The glory is departed  
from Israel; for the ark of God is taken.  
5. Now the Philistines had taken the ark of God, and

<sup>1</sup> Lacking in G.<sup>2</sup> Better, *they*.

was over, but that she had born a son, the desideratum of every Hebrew mother.

21. **She named.** The pronoun can only refer to the mother. As she was already dead, unless indeed *delivery* be read in v. 20, not merely "unconscious" as H. P. Smith puts it, she must have named the child before his birth. We may render, however, *they named*, the name being given by the women in attendance. **Ichabod.** The text gives a free interpretation of the name, which really means *there is no glory*, and so *the glory is gone*. With G. we must omit all of the verse after the child's name, for the text shows amplification and repetition. The glory of Israel was neither Eli nor Phinehas, but the ark of God, and so v. 22 gives the true reason for the name. **Ichabod** was not a person of any importance, for he is mentioned but once elsewhere, 14 : 3, and then only in connection with his older brother, Ahijah.

5 f. The captured ark carries disaster wherever it goes among the Philistines, and after vain conferences with the five lords, the priests and diviners advise a plan to placate Jahveh, and to ascertain whether he wishes the ark returned. In accordance with this scheme, the ark is carried back to the borders of Israel. The passage contains many difficulties; as the text stands—and the matter is still more decisive in G.—there were three disasters which followed the taking of the ark, the demolition of the image of Dagon, the bubonic plague, and the devastation of mice. But the mice are only mentioned in connection with the devices proposed to placate Jahveh. Ch. 5 relates the disasters, and ch. 6 the priests' plan for relief. If the destruction of the crops by mice was an original part of the story, the account of their operations should have been in c. 5 in connection with the other disasters. It is well known that field mice may stand as the symbol of a plague, and modern science has shown that rats actually carry the bubonic plague (*Harper's Magazine*, November, 1912). Hence some scholars hold that the mice do not represent a third calamity, but are to be interpreted symbolically. But in that case it is difficult to see why the guilt offering should comprise both im-

2. they brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod. And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it
3. into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow,

ages of the tumors and of the mice, nor why it should be said that atonement was necessary for the people, the gods and the land. It is better radically to emend the text and excise all references to the mice, or else to hold to the three forms of disaster. From a hint in G. it is possible that the failure of the lords to accomplish any alleviation of the plague was followed by an adequate account of the plague of mice, an account of which we have now only the fragment in G. (see note on 6: 1). In that case the story would be that when one evil failed to bring about the return of the ark another was inflicted, this course continuing until the desired end was attained, exactly along the lines of the plagues in Egypt to which reference is made in 6: 6.

The ark in the temple of Dagon, 5: 1-5

1. **Now.** The Hebrew idiom shows the taking up of a thread of the story temporarily dropped. This section goes back to 4: 11. The author first described the effect of the loss of the ark among the Hebrews, and now relates the fortunes of the Philistines who had the ark in their possession. *Taken* in the sense of *captured*. **Ashdod** was one of the five principal cities of the Philistines, of which two others, Gath and Ekron, are named below, vs. 8, 10, and all are enumerated in 6: 17. Since the ark was taken there, it may safely be surmised that the chief temple of Dagon was in that city. It was near the Mediterranean coast.

2. **By Dagon**, that is by the image of Dagon, with which the god is identified. So the Philistines had identified the ark with God, 4: 7. Dagon appears to be the national God of the Philistines, cf. Judg-16: 23. The temple of Dagon was still standing many centuries later, 1 Macc. 10: 83.

3. **On the morrow.** In place of this the G. reads, *and they came into the house of Dagon and looked*. Presumably this temple, like that of Shiloh, was opened every morning by the resident priests, although the Greek text implies that the townspeople first discovered the downfall of their god. **Upon his face.** The detailed description means that the image of Dagon was doing obeisance before the ark as a subject would to his king. The point is that Dagon is doing homage to Jahveh and so recognizing his superiority. According to the G. the plague is described as breaking out now, coincident with the first humiliation of Dagon.



- behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon,
4. and set him in his place again. And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *lay* cut off upon the threshold; only *the stump*
5. *of* Dagon was left to him. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod, unto this day.

4. The second calamity which befell the god the next night is not clear. We cannot ignore an interesting reading in G.: *the head of Dagon and the soles of both feet had been taken to the front of the dwelling, and the palms of both hands had fallen upon the porch*. This is a more suitable text, as it completes the account of the damage to the idol. The last clause of the Heb. text is very obscure. The English rendering is a free interpretation. The text has, *only Dagon was left upon it*, i. e., Dagon, and this is meaningless. From the damage described, especially in the fuller Greek text, we expect something like *only the trunk was left to him*. The sure conclusion is that the image of Dagon was badly damaged.

5. From this accident a new rite arises among the Philistine worshippers. The threshold of the temple upon which the hands of Dagon had fallen became sacred, and was never more trod upon, cf. Zeph. 1 : 9. G. adds: *but they step clear over it*.

It is tempting to be less discreet than most commentators and to seek the cause of these accidents to Dagon, supposing that the story relates a real occurrence. The Philistines explain them as the result of Jahveh's displeasure at the imprisonment of that which they identify with him, v. 7, and doubtless the Hebrews would have given the same interpretation. The modern mind, however, looks upon God as too spiritual a being to be committing material depredations upon the image of a heathen god. It would rejoice the Hebrews to know that Dagon prostrated himself before the ark, but the God of Israel could hardly feel satisfaction in the homage of an idol.

Another explanation at least is available. We note that the damage was always done in the night. If we may trust the G., in v. 3 (see note), the temple was left unguarded during the night. As the result

6. But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with  
 7. tumours, even Ashdod and the borders thereof. And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our

of the Philistine victory at Eben-ezer, many thousands of Israelites were slain, and certainly many hundreds must have been taken as prisoners, for captives were always desirable booty in war as they sold readily as slaves. Most of these prisoners would be taken to Ashdod, as that city was apparently the headquarters of the army which had fought Israel.

To the Hebrews the virtual imprisonment of Jahveh in the temple of Dagon was a bitter fact, but it was a fact whose bitterness could be relieved by a daring spirit. So some Israelite entered the temple by night<sup>1</sup> and reversed the position of the gods, leaving Dagon in the act of doing homage to Jahveh, and when that damage was easily undone, the sacred idol was visited again, and there was left a mere inglorious trunk. So the Philistines were impressed with the power of the God of Israel, and the way was prepared for the ultimate return of the ark. What the armies of Israel could not do, a single prisoner in a foreign land, fired by zeal for his God could do.

A plague breaks out wherever the ark is taken, 5 : 6-12.

6. **Destroyed them** is too strong, and leads to an anticlimax, for then there would be nothing left; the word really means, *he worked havoc among them*. **Tumours**. In late Hebrew the word so rendered meant hæmorrhoids, and is so interpreted in some texts of the G. The word became indelicate, as such words always do in time, and the Hebrews substituted in reading the innocent word *tumours*. It is evident, however, that this tradition is wrong, for the whole passage can only be satisfied by supposing a highly contagious and fatal disease, and there is good reason to accept the conjecture that it was the terrible bubonic plague which caused such havoc in Philistia. **The borders**. The pestilence quickly spread to the suburbs of Ashdod.

7. The people assume naturally that the plague was inflicted by Jahveh because of the ark; it would therefore follow that relief could only be found by getting rid of the ark.

<sup>1</sup> It was at night that the priests of Bel entered the temple and removed the food placed before the image by the worshippers so as to make the people believe that the god ate it, a trick cleverly exposed by Daniel (*Bel and the Dragon*).

8. god. They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And<sup>1</sup> they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto<sup>2</sup> Gath. And they carried the ark of the
9. God of Israel about<sup>3</sup> *thither*. And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great discomfiture: and he smote the men of the city, both small and
10. great, and tumours brake out upon them. So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to<sup>1</sup> us, to slay<sup>1</sup> us and<sup>2</sup> our people.

<sup>1</sup> G. *the Gittites*.<sup>2</sup> G. *us*.<sup>3</sup> G. *unto Gath*.

8. **The lords**, for which G. uses the Persian term *satraps*. There were five of these lords, Josh. 13 : 3, Judg. 3 : 3, 1 Sam. 6 : 16, 18. As there were five chief Philistine cities, Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron, it is plain that the government of Philistia was in the hands of the chiefs of the confederated cities. According to the probably correct Greek text, the people of Gath themselves proposed to undertake the custody of the captured ark. They had no fear and coveted the honor of holding the trophy. *Gath* was some distance south of Ashdod, and the idea may have been that the ark would be the less potent for harm the further away it was from Shiloh.

9. The same disease straightway broke out among the Gittites, for some of those who had carried the ark from Ashdod were already infected with the disease, and it spread naturally.

10. **Ekron** was the nearest to Shiloh of the five Philistine cities, and it appears that the afflicted people were already working the ark back towards its home. From the distressful protest of the Ekronites, it is evident that they had not volunteered to receive the ark. Its bad repute was already too well known. **To us**. The Hebrew *to me* indicates that the protest was voiced by the lord of Ekron, and not by the mass of the people. R. V. follows the Greek, and that is necessary to be consistent with the term *Ekronites*, for which we should otherwise have to read *the lord of Ekron*.

11. They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and they said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to its own place, that it slay <sup>1</sup> us not, and <sup>2</sup> our people: for there was a deadly discomfiture throughout all the city; <sup>3</sup>
12. the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men that died not were smitten with the tumours: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *me.*    <sup>2</sup> Heb. *my.*    <sup>3</sup> G. *when the ark of the God of Israel came there.*

11. The Ekronites feared that the plague would break out among them now that the ark was in their city, and so the chief council was again summoned, they alone having adequate authority, and the people of Ekron begged that the ark be sent back to Israel, making a definite proposal in place of the general inquiry of v. 8. Their fears were realized promptly, for plague and panic at once broke loose. **Deadly discomfiture**, literally *a panic of death*, i. e., a panic caused by the appalling number of deaths.

12. The meaning is that everybody was taken with the disease. Many died, and even those who escaped death were nevertheless afflicted with the dread disease. **To heaven** *cf. to God*, Ex. 2 : 23, where the meaning is, so that God heard it, and took measures for relief. Such a sense would be unsuitable here, as Jahveh could not be supposed to act for the Philistines. The meaning can only be that the anguished cry of the Ekronites was so loud that it could be heard in heaven.

A further plague and the return of the ark, 6-7 : 1

The Philistines hold a council and by the advice of their religious leaders the ark with suitable trespass-offerings is placed at the whim of a pair of unbroken cattle. It is carried first to Beth-shemesh where it is received with joy; but soon the plague breaks out there, and the Beth-shemites pass the ark on to Kiriath-jearim, where Eleazer is consecrated as its custodian, and where it remained for many years until David removed it to Jerusalem.

This chapter is full of difficulties. The text is unusually corrupt, though some important restorations may be made on the basis of the G. There are some inconsistencies, especially in regard to the number of mice, five, according to v. 4; but one for every town and village, according to v. 18. The introduction of the Levites, v. 15, indicates that the passage has been edited by late hands. The passage is the natural sequel to ch. 5, and yet the connection is poor.

6. And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the  
 2. Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called  
 for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall  
 we do with the ark of the LORD? shew us wherewith  
 3. we shall send it to its place. And they said, If ye send  
 away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty;  
 but in any wise return him a guilt offering: then ye  
 shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his  
 4. hand is not removed from you. Then said they, What

For there is in our text no reference to the council called in 5:11, v. 1 seems to separate the two sections. In ch. 5:11 it is certain that the people believe the ark the cause of the plague, and have determined that the lords must send it back. In ch. 6 the return is an open question. The difficulty would be relieved if we assumed that it was the lords who consulted the priests.

1. **Seven months** indicates the time from the capture of the ark to its return. To this v. the G. adds, *and their land swarmed with mice*. This introduces a second plague, and prepares the way for the otherwise inexplicable offering of golden mice in v. 4 ff. It makes a third disaster resulting from the indignity to the ark. This may explain the passage by inferring that nothing resulted from the council of 5:11, and that action was only taken when the second plague broke out. The bubonic plague had been confined to the cities, the pest of field mice spread over the whole country.

2. **Philistines**. The whole people act now, not the lords as in ch. 5. They had been summoned and had accomplished nothing; therefore the people call for the **priests and the diviners**, to which G. adds *enchanters*, to learn by what means the ark could be sent to its own land. The Philistine diviners were famous, Is. 2:6, 2 Kings 1:2.

3. **Guilt offering**, for the soothsayers assume that the Philistines have committed some trespass for which Jahveh has punished them. When Jahveh is placated, the people will be cured of the disease. **When his hand is not removed from you** is unintelligible. We might follow G. *whether his hand shall be removed from you*, which is consistent with v. 9. But then the positive prediction **ye shall be healed** becomes impossible. In view of v. 9, it is better to correct more freely and render: *it shall be known to you whether ye shall be healed and his hand removed from you*. That alone harmonizes with v. 5.

4 f. These vs. are very difficult. It is best to correct with the partial aid of G. and read the counsel thus: *the number of the lords*

- shall be the guilt offering which we shall return to him? And they said, Five golden tumours,<sup>1</sup> and five golden mice,<sup>1</sup> *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all,<sup>2</sup> and
5. on your lords. Wherefore<sup>3</sup> ye shall make images of your tumours,<sup>3</sup> and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.
  6. Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among<sup>4</sup> them, did they
  7. not let the people go, and they departed? Now

<sup>1</sup> Lacking in G.    <sup>2</sup> With G. omit *all*.    <sup>3</sup> Lacking in G.    <sup>4</sup> Better, *ruthlessly*.

*of the Philistines is five; five golden tumors; for there is a single plague to you and to your lords; and golden mice like the mice which devastated your land; and ye shall honor the God of Israel.* The lords are representative of the whole people, so that the five tumors will suffice as expiation for all. The number of the mice is not given here, but according to v. 18 there would be very many. There were three features in the devastation, and the prescription covers all points, the tumors to relieve the disease, the mice to drive off the plague, and honor to the offended deity that Dagon might be disturbed no more. Thus we are in a position to understand the conclusion that God's heavy hand would be lightened from the people, their god and their soil. Images of a disorder were supposed to be efficacious as a means of relief; so Moses made a brazen serpent to cure snake bites, Num. 21 : 8 ff.

6. This v. sounds more like an utterance of the Hebrews than of the Philistines. In part, however, it agrees with the expressed fear of Jahveh in 4 : 8. But it exhorts the people to do the very thing they had called upon the holy men to show them how to do. The idea is that the Philistines must not hold back as the Egyptians did at first to the increase of their woes; but as the Egyptians finally saved themselves by releasing the Israelites, so the Philistines must find relief by sending back the ark.

7. Another feature is introduced now, the object being to see whether Jahveh desired to go back to his own land. A new cart as



therefore take and prepare you a new cart, and two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home  
 8. from them: and take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a guilt offering, in a coffer by the side  
 9. thereof; and send it away, that it may go. And see, if it goeth up by the way of its own border to Beth-shemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that  
 10. smote us; it was a chance that happened to us. And

befits the dignity of a God. The vehicle must be one not profaned by common use. **Two milch kine.** Heifers would be natural save that the test required cows with young. The choosing of unprofaned cattle is indicated in the qualification, **on which there had come no yoke.** Their calves were to be taken from them, and shut up in the stalls. The cattle would naturally seek their young even when yoked to the cart. If they went in another direction, it would show the guidance of Jahveh, leading the ark back to its own land.

8. **Jewels** is not a very happy description of the tumors and mice, though they may have been made very small. The Hebrew term is a very general one and had better be rendered *articles*. The Hebrew must be rendered *in the coffer at its side*. The word rendered *coffer* is found nowhere else, and the meaning is uncertain. From the statement here it would appear to be a part of the ark, but from vs. 11, 15 it seems to be distinct from the ark itself.

9. Care is taken to make a test so as to learn positively whether the evil had come from Jahveh or was an ordinary accident. The sign element enters into the Philistine as well as the Hebrew religious conceptions. The sign was in the course taken by the cattle, and the test was made as hard as possible. For Jahveh to get the ark back, the cattle must be led away from their calves and so contrary to their natural inclination. **Beth-shemesh** was a border town and one of the nearest Jewish cities, but it was not on the way towards Shiloh, the previous seat of the ark, but the point was that if the ark was carried towards the land of Israel, it would be Jahveh's work. The whole country was Jahveh's, not merely Shiloh.

10 f. These verses merely state that the Philistines did as the soothsayers had directed, and repeat almost word for word what

- the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied<sup>1</sup> them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home:
11. and they put the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with<sup>2</sup> the mice of gold and the images of
12. their tumours. And the kine took the straight way by the way to Beth-shemesh; they went along the high way,<sup>3</sup> lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-
13. shemesh. And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up

<sup>1</sup> Better, *harnessed or yoked*.  
and also *on a straight road*.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *and*.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *one high way*; G. has this

has gone before. The differences are probably accidental, at all events they do not affect the sense. The **coffer** or *receptacle* is mentioned here as if it were one of the offerings, for the rendering **with the mice of gold** presupposes an emendation of the text.

12. **Straight way** does not bring out the true force of the original. There was hardly a straight road; moreover the "straight" is in the verb in Hebrew. We should render: *And the cattle went straight on the way in the direction of Beth-shemesh*. The point is abundantly emphasized that the moment they were loosed the kine started directly towards Beth-shemesh, and did not reach it by devious paths. **The high way**. The term is more specific than that rendered *way* above. That might mean direction or course; here we have the definite term *high way*. The Hebrew reads *on one road*. That again emphasizes the sign or miracle, for it stresses the fact that the kine kept to the direct road, never wandering off even though they were free to go where they would. **Lowing** because they missed their young which had been shut up in the stalls. **Went after them**, or *were following them*. Their object was to keep enough in the background not to control the direction of the cattle, and still to be able to see where they went. Only **the lords** are mentioned here, but as this was a popular movement, it seems probable that some of the people and certainly some of the holy men accompanied the strange caravan. **The border**, for once the cattle carry the ark to the confines of Israel, the sign is complete, and according to the text it is proved that it was Jahveh's hand that had plagued the Philistines.

13. **Wheat harvest**. This indicates first the time, about the first



- their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.
14. And the cart came into the field of Joshua the Bethshemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered up the kine for a burnt offering unto the LORD.
15. And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed

of June, so that the ark had been captured about the first of November, v. 1; and second it explains the presense of a large number of Beth-shemites on the border. The towns were on high places for better protection, but the harvest brought all the people into the valley. *Rejoiced.* If we recall the terrible distress produced by the loss of the ark, ch. 4, it will be easy to understand the joy at its return.

14. **Field of Joshua.** It is not easy to see why the particular place is described, for Joshua plays no special part in the story. It might be clear if we know more of the details. Budde goes no further than to note that *Joshua* contains the divine name Jahveh, implying that Jahveh, who guided the ark to its resting place, chose the land of one who was his namesake. **Where there was a great stone**, or better, *and a great stone was there.* The ark was guided to a place where there was a great stone, and so plainly suggesting that Jahveh desired a sacrifice. We lose this force by correcting after G. as H. P. Smith does, *they set a great stone there.* God provided the stone, as he had once provided the sacrifice, Gen. 22 : 8. A great stone was an altar ready made, 14 : 33. **They clave.** Most commentators suppose that the sacrifice was made by the Beth-shemites, and v. 13 does so imply. But the sacrifice of the Israelites is fully described below, and if our text is to be trusted, it seems an appropriate ending to the Philistines' return of the ark, that they should have offered a sacrifice to the God whose hand had been heavy upon them, and who had showed his power by leading the cattle to Beth-shemesh. Thus they would comply with the prescription to honor the God of Israel, v. 5, and then they would be free to return home.

15. **The Levites.** The mention of the Levites as custodians of the ark shows a later hand. The first part of the verse is a clumsy interpolation. We are told that the Levites took the ark from the cart, which had already been split and burned for the sacrifice, v. 14.

16. sacrifices the same day unto the LORD. And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.
17. And these are the golden tumours which the Philistines returned for a guilt offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath one,
18. for Ekron one; and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities and of country villages: even unto the great stone,<sup>1</sup> whereon they set down the ark of the LORD, *which stone remaineth* unto
19. this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite. And he smote of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote

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<sup>1</sup> Heb. has *mourning*, an obvious error from confusing similar words.

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The sacrifices of the Beth-shemites were thank offerings for the return of the ark, and these were not the same as those described in v. 13. Budde rejects the whole of v. 15 as a gloss, in which case the offering of v. 14 would be that of the Beth-shemites.

17. So far as we know only three cities had been visited by the plague, Ashdod, Gath and Ekron. The plague may, of course, have reached other cities; but in any case, whatever offense had been committed against Jahveh was the wrong of the whole people, and so each chief city must join in the atonement.

18. There was a gold mouse for every town and hamlet of the whole Philistine country, so that the number must have been very large. **The great stone** is here described as if it were one of the Philistine villages, or by a loose construction a Philistine boundary. As a matter of fact this stone was in the land of an Israelite, and we can only get sense by a slight change of the text so as to read: *and the great stone, upon which they set the ark of Jahveh is to this day a witness in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite.* The stone still stood in its original place in the writer's time, and naively this fact is assured as proof of the story. Memorial stones as witnesses were not uncommon in Hebrew tales, Gen. 31 : 52, Josh. 24 : 27, Is. 19 : 19 f.

19. Our text declares that Jahveh smote the Beth-shemites because they looked into the ark. But there is no evidence that such

- of the people seventy men, *and* fifty thousand men: and the people mourned, because the LORD had
20. smitten the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? and to whom shall he<sup>1</sup>
21. go up from us? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.
7. And the men of Kiriath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of

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<sup>1</sup> G. *the ark.*

an act was sinful, even if the appeal is made to the later law. Moreover, the repetition of *smote* is very awkward. The true text has been preserved in G. and runs: *And the sons of Jeconiah did not rejoice with the men of Beth-shemesh when they saw the ark of Jahveh and he smote of them*, i. e., of the sons of Jeconiah. Jeconiah was like Joshua the head of one of the clans of Beth-shemesh. For some reason his family did not share the joy due to the return of the ark. A deadly blow came to them, presumably the contagious disease was still carried by the ark, and these two parts are explained by the Hebrew writer as cause and effect. Any calamity was regarded by the Hebrews as a divine chastisement for which some cause must be found. It appears that the ark was regarded as potent for evil as well as for good, cf. 2 Sam. 6 : 6 f. **Fifty thousand men** is a gloss, due to some scribe who felt that the death of seventy men was an insufficient punishment. There were not fifty thousand people in Beth-shemesh. **Great slaughter** does not require more than seventy, for relatively to the population the loss was very great; the family of Jeconiah must have been practically exterminated.

20. The Beth-shemites felt about the ark as the Philistines had, and as the latter had passed it along from town to town, so the former send to the men of Kiriath-jearim to ask them to receive the dangerous treasure. Kiriath-jearim was selected because it was near at hand. The site is not certain, but it was probably but a few miles away.

7 : 1. **Abinadab.** Nothing further is known about him or his son. Probably the house of Abinadab was chosen because it was on a hill, the only suitable site for a holy place. The ark must have its proper custodian, like Samuel and the sons of Eli the priest, and as this

Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep <sup>1</sup> the ark of the LORD.

3. *Samuel's War on the Philistines, 7: 2-17*

2. And it came to pass, from the day that the ark abode in Kiriath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented

<sup>1</sup> Or *guard*.

was a holy office, there was some ceremony by which the keeper of the ark was consecrated. It is purely gratuitous to assume that Eleazar was a Levite, an idea which belongs to far later times. The house of Abinadab becomes now a sort of local sanctuary, like the house of Micah earlier, Judg. 17. The ark remained at this place until it was taken to Jerusalem by David, 2 Sam. 6, an event beautifully described in Ps. 132.

Under Samuel's direction the Israelites are freed from the Philistine oppression. Samuel is a priest and judge, and in effect a national dictator, a conception for which the way is prepared in the present form of ch. 3. Israel here acts as a nation. The defeat of the Philistines is complete and permanent and is accomplished by direct divine act, and not by arms. The preparation of the people is not military but religious. In many respects it is much like Josh. 1-12.

The section stands quite by itself, as it ignores the devastation of Philistia in ch. 4-6, and the appointment of Saul as king, for here Samuel judges Israel all his life. The passage is one of the stories, preserved in a late form, told to glorify the career of Samuel. As a historical source the story is of little help. The best we could make of it is that a local and temporary check has been magnified into a national and permanent overthrow of the Philistines, such as was not accomplished until the time of David.

2. **Twenty years.** This verse seems to be an editorial note to connect the narrative following with the preceding section. The meaning seems to be that Samuel's conflict with the Philistines took place twenty years after the depositing of the ark in Kiriath-jearim. **Lamented** is difficult. The Greek offers *looked* or *turned in peace*. To harmonize with v. 3, we must suppose there had been an era of apostasy, during which Israel had gotten along badly, and that now they lament because they are not receiving help from their God.

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3. after the LORD. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your heart, then put away the strange gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver
  4. you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.
  5. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I
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3. This v. connects directly with 4 : 1a. **All the house of Israel.** There was evidently some sort of gathering, of which Samuel takes advantage to address the people, exhorting them to abandon the worship of all gods but Jahveh and expressing the usual theological conception that God would only help his people when they were faithful to him. Ashtaroth is the plural form of an ancient Semitic deity, now well known under the Assyrian form as *Ishtar*. The cult of this god extended to the west, as we know from the Phœnician name *Astarte*. In our text the term probably covers several local deities. **Out of the hand of the Philistines.** These words explain the story we have in this section. The people were under the domination of their western neighbors, and the lamenting of v. 2 is due to their feeling that God was not helping them in their distress.

4. **Put away.** The words imply an extensive religious reformation. The Israelites had recently come into Canaan, and naturally felt that they must placate the gods of the land, called **Baalim** and *Astaroth*, cf. 2 Ki. 17 : 25 ff. Now they must have destroyed the shrines at which these deities had been worshipped. **Baalim** is the plural form of the god *Baal* or *Bel*, another ancient Semitic deity whose cult was extensive in Canaan. The term corresponds to the general expression *strange gods* of v. 3.

5. After the reform was completed, Samuel directs all the people to assemble in order that they might worship Jahveh alone by such rites as would be certain to win his favor. **Mizpah** has been located about five miles north of Jerusalem, so that the assembly was held in the hill country, doubtless because it was safer. Judging from cc. 1-3, Shiloh would have been the natural meeting place for a religious gathering; but we may assume either that Shiloh had been destroyed by the Philistines, or that the loss of the ark had robbed that sanctuary of its preëminence. However, it is to be noted that Mizpah was

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6. will pray for you unto the LORD. And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out <sup>1</sup> before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there,<sup>2</sup> We have sinned against the LORD. And
7. Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the
8. Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that
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<sup>1</sup> G. adds, *upon the ground.*

<sup>2</sup> Omit *there* after G.

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the sanctuary at which the great assembly was held to devise a suitable punishment for the Benjamites, Judg. 20.

6. **Poured it out.** A libation of blood, or symbolically of wine, was common, but the use of water is unknown in the Old Testament except in this passage, though we may compare David's pouring out the water from the Bethlehem well, 2 Sam. 23 : 16. Libations of water were common among the Babylonians. As the rite is associated with fasting and confession, its significance was penitential. **Sinned**, not here by the violation of moral precepts, but by the violation of the first commandment in worshipping the gods of Canaan. **Samuel judged.** This phrase does not usually refer to a temporary act, but to a protracted state of life, *cf.* v. 15. The sentence seems out of place here. The explanation would be that during the days of the assembly, Samuel held court and settled the disagreements which arose among the people.

7. **Philistines heard.** The gathering of a large number of people in one place had the same direful significance that mobilization has in Europe to-day. If we assume that Israel was at the time practically a subject state, the assembly would be interpreted as an uprising against the sovereign power. **Lords of the Philistines** refers to the chiefs of the five principal cities, 6 : 17 f., each chief being followed by a band of warriors.

8. **Cease not.** These words carry us back to Samuel's promise to pray for the people, v. 5. In their peril they beseech the prophet to keep up prayer on their behalf continually. We are reminded of



- he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.
9. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt offering unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD answered him.
10. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder<sup>1</sup> on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and
11. they were smitten down before Israel. And the

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<sup>1</sup> Heb. *sound*.

the battle with the Amalekites in which Israel was victorious only when Moses was in the attitude of prayer, Ex. 17 : 11.

9. **Sucking lamb** corresponds to the yearling lamb which was prescribed for a sacrifice in the Law, Ex. 29 : 38. **Whole burnt offering.** Usually when an animal was sacrificed, it was eaten in part or wholly by the worshippers; but when the offering was to be particularly impressive, the whole was consumed on the altar, that is, given to God. The object was probably to make the strongest possible appeal for his favor. **Answered**, not in the sense in which we speak of the answer to prayer, but in a very literal sense, in the sound of the thunder.

10. There are three remarkable coincidences, however they may be explained, the offering of the sacrifice, the hostile approach of the Philistines, and the oncoming of a furious thunderstorm. The qualification, **with a great sound** indicates one of those blinding, bewildering and terrifying thunderstorms which sometimes sweep over Palestine as well as over other parts of the world. That the thunderstorm was regarded as a special manifestation of Jahveh is clear from Ps. 29, as well as from numerous other passages. **Discomfited**, or *threw them into a panic*. The Hebrew word is interesting as it suggests a state of confusion especially as the result of noise. **Were smitten down before Israel** is usually referred to the effects of the storm, the part of the Israelites coming later. But such an interpretation strains language pretty hard, and these words are best explained as giving the general result of the battle, Israel's part in which is described later.

11. **Pursued.** The Hebrews were apparently not affected by the storm. Thunder storms often sweep over a narrow course, and Israel may have been out of the center of disturbance; or they may



- men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under <sup>1</sup>
12. Beth-car. Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped
13. us. So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of
14. Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the border thereof did Israel deliver out of the hand of the Philistines. And there

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<sup>1</sup> Better, *below*.

have been spared any panic because the thunder was to them the voice of God speaking in their behalf. *Beth-car* is mentioned as a well known place, and yet the name does not occur elsewhere. Klostermann proposed Beth-horon, the scene of Joshua's great victory, a battle in which a storm also played a conspicuous part; Josh. 10:10f.

12. **Eben-ezer** means *stone of help* and therefore the name is appropriate here. The name, however, was given to the scene of the battle with the Philistines which took place twenty years before, 4:1.

13. This verse shows a hand quite frequently visible in the historical books, condensing a struggle which lasted for many years into a single event. As a matter of fact Israel suffered for long afterwards at the hands of the Philistines. They were the power that harassed Saul, and yielded only to the great powers and skill of David. But here the complete defeat of the foe is credited to Samuel.

14. **From Ekron even unto Gath.** For *Gath* we would better read with Wellhausen *Gaza*, then the meaning is that the whole land of Philistia was taken by Israel, and the assumption is that this land had once belonged to Israel. In late writings it is assumed that Israel's borders extended to the Mediterranean Sea, Num. 34:6. Ekron and Gaza are both assigned to the tribe of Judah, Josh. 15:45, 47. The Amorites is the general term for the Canaanites, and so broader than *the Philistines* would be. This writer holds that the result of Samuel's great victory, was that the whole land of Canaan

15. was peace between Israel and the Amorites. And  
 16. Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he  
 went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal,  
 and Mizpah; and he judged Israel in all those places.  
 17. And his return was to Ramah, for there was his house;  
 and there he judged Israel: and he built there an altar  
 unto the LORD.

## II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM, CHS. 8-12

### 1. *The Later Story*, Ch. 8; (see also 10 : 17-27; 12)

8. And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he

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was completely subdued, as it had formerly been treated as conquered by Joshua. This writer realizes that Israel had been dominated by the Philistines.

15-17 describe the manner in which Samuel exercised his rulership, going about to different cities, and settling such cases as were brought to him. The permanent altar was not at Mizpah but at Samuel's home in Ramah, the headquarters of his family, *cf.* 1 : 1. Shiloh does not appear in this story. The idea that Samuel ruled all his life ignores the appointment of Saul as king.

In this section it is easy to see that the compiler has combined two independent and practically complete accounts of the same event. The earlier story (T) is found in 9 : 1-10 : 16, 10 : 27b-11; the later (N) is in 8, 10 : 17-27a, 12. The two accounts differ in style and in their whole view of the condition. In N we find marked hostility to the monarchy, which is grudgingly given in response to a popular demand; in T Jahveh himself sets up the kingdom to save the people. In T the king is selected by a seer who inspires him to a heroic action in order thus to win the throne; in N the king is chosen from all Israel by lot. In N Samuel is a great national leader, without whom the people cannot act; in T he is a little known local seer. In T Saul is the central figure, in N Samuel occupies first place.

It is altogether probable that the earlier story gives the true account of the elevation of Saul, for the method here described is the way kings were made in ancient Israel. The man who would be king must first show himself to be the stuff of which kings are made. Saul's rescue of Jabesh-gilead makes the earlier anointing effective.

2. made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second,
3. Abijah: they were judges in Beer-sheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.
4. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves to-
5. gether, and came to Samuel unto Ramah: and they said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk

(1) *The people request Samuel to establish a monarchy in Israel, 8 : 1-5*

The request is based on three grounds: Samuel's sons are not just and honest like their father; Israel wants a permanent government like other nations; and they require a natural and prepared leader in war, so as not to be dependent upon some one's rising to the occasion as in the time of the judges.

1. **He made his sons judges.** It was the general custom in early Israel for the son to succeed to the father's office. The sons of Gideon succeeded him on the throne, Judg. 9, and the sons of Eli were exercising the priesthood in their father's old age.

2. The names of Samuel's sons are given also in 1 Chr. 6 : 28. Each contains a name of the deity, *Jah* or *El*. **Beer-sheba** is doubtful, for it was on the very southern borders of Judah, a country that hardly gets a place in the history until the time of David. If the sons were so far away, the whole people of Israel would hardly make a complaint against them. Josephus says that one son judged in Bethel and the other in Beer-sheba.

3. **In his ways.** The passage bears indirect testimony to the integrity of Samuel. Criminal charges were laid against his sons, but their course was not their father's. The law for the judge is given in Deut. 16 : 19. Grafting has always been too characteristic of Oriental courts. The phrases are not redundant, for the word translated *lucre* really means unlawful gain procured by violence, and therefore is not the same as a bribe.

4. **The elders of Israel**, cf. 4 : 3, implies that the clan leaders, or in Oriental terminology the *sheiks*, acted on behalf of the masses of the people. The leaders would go to Samuel, as he is regarded as possessing final authority. **Ramah** is regarded as Samuel's home in agreement with 7 : 17.

5. **Thou art old.** The objection to old men continuing too long in their office is very ancient. **To judge us.** In the strict sense of the word judging is one of the minor functions of the king. But the term

- not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like  
 6. all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel,  
 when <sup>1</sup> they said, Give us a king to judge us. And  
 7. Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said  
 unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people  
 in all that they say unto thee: for they have not re-  
 jected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should  
 8. not be king over them. According to all the works <sup>2</sup>  
 which they have done <sup>3</sup> since the day that I brought

<sup>1</sup> Better, *in that*.<sup>2</sup> Better *deeds*.<sup>3</sup> Add with G. *unto me*.

is used here as in the book of Judges in a broad sense. When we are told that Samuel judged Israel, the meaning is that he was the chief ruler, and that was the office to which he had appointed his sons. **Like all the nations.** Most of the surrounding peoples were ruled by their kings. There seems to have been a sort of oligarchy in Philistia, although later we shall find a king of Gath who seems to exercise a supremacy over the whole land. The people felt that they were at a disadvantage because they had no fixed and responsible head, whose business it would be to see that the people were not oppressed by their neighbors.

(2) *Jahveh directs Samuel to comply with the elders' request, 8 : 6-9*

6. **Displeased Samuel.** A more literal rendering softens the expression a bit: *the proposal was evil in the eyes of Samuel*, that is, he disapproved of the setting up of a king. The reason of his displeasure appears in Jahveh's address in v. 7. The anointing of a king would displace Samuel and his sons from their position of authority. It was in effect a revolt against theocratic government. **Samuel prayed** to find a way out of the difficulty. The will of God is revealed now, not by the ephod, but by what was called *the word of the Lord*, cf. 3 : 21 in answer to prayer. The answer is in vs. 7-9.

7. **They have rejected me.** In rejecting Samuel the people were rejecting God, for the prophet was God's mouthpiece. The author of this section was hostile to the monarchy, and regarded the simple theocratic government as the divine plan. The people on the other hand felt that this system had broken down, and, on account of the character of the successors of Samuel, liable to bring still further trouble. In spite of the divine displeasure Samuel is directed to comply fully with the demand of Israel. The writer knew that the

- them up out of Egypt even unto this day, in that they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they  
 9. also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit thou shalt protest solemnly unto them, and shalt shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.  
 10. And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the  
 11. people that asked of him a king. And he said, This

monarchy had been established, and he represents God as allowing it, though he disapproved it.

8. **So do they also unto thee.** The people have treated God's representative as they have treated him, by rejecting him as their leader. In characteristic Deuteronomic phrases we have a summary of Israel's history alleging that the people had been rebellious against God's rule from the first. The words hardly do the people's case justice. There is no sign of any objection to Samuel's rule, but only to that of his corrupt sons.

9. **Protest solemnly** does not quite convey the idea. The time for objection is past. The will of the people is to prevail, but Samuel is directed *to bear witness* in advance as to the character of the kingly rule; **manner of the king** refers therefore to the character of his administration. This is outlined in vs. 10-18.

(3) *A forecast of the king's government, 8 : 10-18*

From the circumstances we should expect a description of the rule of Saul, as he was the king immediately in question. As a matter of fact the passage constitutes an excellent description of the administration of Solomon. There is no evidence that the government of either Saul or David was oppressive to the people, but rather the contrary. The passage is related to the law of the king, Dt. 17 : 14 ff., note especially the phrase in v. 14, **I will set a king over me like all the nations round about me**, cf. vs. 5, 20. The chief points are that the king will impose forced service upon the people, for personal as well as for military services, and that he will impose taxes upon them. These conditions are essential to the existence of a monarchy, but the point is that the impositions will be excessive.

10. **All the words.** What follows is only a part of the message which came to Samuel. The implication is that he told the people also that their demand was a rebellion against their God, but that it would be granted only to bring them distress in the end.

11. **Appoint them unto him**, that is, appropriate their services to

- will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you; he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and
12. they shall run before his chariots: and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties;<sup>1</sup> and *he will set some* to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and
13. to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your
- 14.

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<sup>1</sup> G. reads *hundreds*.

his own use in the various ways defined. For his chariots, literally *in his chariots*. A text of G. reads *appoint them his charioteers*. These men were to drive the king's chariots and fight in them, though personal rather than military uses are meant here. There were probably no royal chariots in Saul's time. **Horsemen** is a military term, though it may refer here to a mounted bodyguard in attendance upon the king. **Run before his chariots**, a body of runners preceding his chariot marked the dignity of the royal state, 2 Sam. 15 : 1, 1 Kings, 1 : 5.

12. **Thousands** is roughly equivalent to our term regiments and **fifties**, which should probably be *hundreds*, corresponds to our companies, although military organization has recently been radically changed. The passage refers only to the appointment of officers, and military office is always deemed a high honor. Menial service is described in what follows, though a part of it is for military purposes. In the indictment of the monarchy much stress is laid upon the burden of the warlike institutions, and thus the cry against excessive armament is by no means modern.

13. Women are to be used only for domestic offices. **Confection** conveys a wrong idea. The Hebrew word has to do with oil used in the manufacture of ointments which are used so largely by the Orientals. The rendering therefore should be *perfumers* or *ointment makers*.

14. The confiscation of private property would mark the king's rule, and here we come to a real oppression which is unfortunately too characteristic of absolute monarchs. Ezekiel refers to this wrong, Ez. 46 : 18. **His servants** are the court officials upon whom the king



- vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them,  
 15. and give them to his servants. And he will take the  
 tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give  
 16. to his officers,<sup>1</sup> and to his servants. And he will take  
 your menservants, and your maidservants, and your  
 goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to  
 17. his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks: and  
 18. ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that  
 day because of your king which ye shall have chosen  
 you; and the LORD will not answer you in that day.

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<sup>1</sup> Or, *eunuchs*.

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would bestow property at the expense of others. The evil of this was not merely in the confiscation, but the violation of family rights: cf. story of Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings 21.

15. **Your seed** is often interpreted as the grain crop; but as the king would naturally tax everything, we need a term complementary to *vineyards*. The Hebrew word may mean *arable land* (*B. D. B. Heb. Lex.*), and that gives the best sense here. The *tithe* was not always an exact tenth, but covers "any import paid in kind upon a fixed scale" (W. R. Smith, *Religion Semites*, p. 227). It was one of the common methods of taxing for the support of an Oriental king. Solomon's method is described in 1 Ki. 4.

16. **Your goodliest young men** does not fit well between slaves and asses, and the conscription of young men has already been described. The G. has read a similar Hebrew word *oxen or cattle*, which suits the text much better.

17. **Your flocks** refers to the sheep, which would be taken for food and clothing as the oxen and asses had been taken for work. Whereas there was no limit to the confiscation of the oxen and asses, the taxing of the sheep was on some fixed scale. **Ye shall be his servants.** We should expect *and give them to his servants* as in v. 14 f. The meaning of the text is that as the result of the whole system of oppression, Israel will lose their freedom and be reduced to bondage. By their own act they will return to the condition of slavery from which their God had redeemed them when he brought them out of Egypt.

18. **Will not answer** because their suffering was brought upon themselves advisedly, they not heeding the abundant warning of God through his prophet. The G. adds *because you demanded a*

19. But the people refused to hearken unto the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king  
 20. over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go before out  
 21. us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears  
 22. of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

2. *The Earlier Story, 9 : 1-10: 16*

9. Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was

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*king for yourselves*, which, as H. P. Smith says, is a correct interpretation.

(4) *The people persist in their demand, 8: 19-22*

19. **Refused.** It is evident that though Samuel had been directed to set up the kingdom as asked, his effort up to this point had been to dissuade the people from what he deemed an inexpedient and wicked request. They refused to be deterred by his dark picture.

20. **Like all the nations.** The people evidently felt that their military inferiority was largely due to their very inadequate organization, both civil and military; and they were undoubtedly right. No small part of David's success later was due to his small body of trained veterans, who were always ready for war. At this point the people enlarge somewhat the reasons which had originally prompted the desire for a king. There is no longer any reference to Samuel's age or to the character of his sons.

22. The prophet was not satisfied until he had carried the case once more to the Lord. This time heaven urges no further reproofs, but only orders the compliance with the popular request. The last half of the verse is generally explained as an insertion by the compiler to make a suitable background for ch. 9. The dispersion of the people hardly serves as a step towards the selection of a king. This story is resumed in 10 : 17.

9: 1-5. Saul's vain search for the last asses.

1. **The son of a Benjamite.** Undoubtedly we should have here

- Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a
2. mighty man of valour. And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a young man and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher
  3. than any of the people. And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek
  4. the asses. And he <sup>1</sup> passed through the hill country of

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<sup>1</sup> Read with G. *they*.

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either a son of Benjamin, Saul then being traced back to the son of Rachel, or less probably, another proper name. It was quite common thus to record the lineage of celebrated persons, *cf. e. g.*, Ruth 4: 18 ff. Ezra 7: 1-5. According to 1 Chron. 8: 33, 9: 39 Saul's father was *Ner*. **Mighty man of valour**, or more probably *of wealth*. There is no evidence of heroism on the part of Kish, but there is of property, and the word bears both senses.

2. **Young man**. As Saul already had an adult son, we need to bear in mind the comprehensiveness of the term *young*. The one definite characteristic of Saul is his great stature. The description occurs in 10: 23, from which, as H. P. Smith suggests our passage may be borrowed.

3. **The asses** implies that the whole herd had strayed.

4. With this verse we find a very abrupt transition from the command of Kish to a description of Saul's journey. The gap is well filled by an often overlooked text of G., which adds to v. 3: *and Saul arose and took one of his father's servants with him, and he set forth to look for the asses of Kish his father*. In this account of Saul's itinerary four places are named, of which two, *Shalishah* and *Shaalim* are quite unknown. The implication is that Saul and his servant searched first the mountains of Ephraim, then through these unknown places and thence to the land of Benjamin, and were now back near home. Gibeah, Kish's home town, was close to the border of Ephraim, and so Saul apparently went north at the start. He must have circled either to the east or west, and on this circuit passed the unknown lands. As the whole journey lasted but three days, the distance travelled was not very great.

- Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they found them not: then they passed through the land of Shaalim, and there they were not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found
5. them not. When they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses,
6. and take thought for us. And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is a man that is held in honour; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go<sup>1</sup> thither; peradventure he can tell us concerning our journey

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<sup>1</sup> G. to him.

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5. Zuph was the home of Samuel's family (*cf.* note on 1 : 1) and was in the mountains of Ephraim. It appears that they had started on a second journey, an impression clear from the Latin text, which adds *and they did not find them*. They may, however, have been comparatively near home when Saul realized that his father might now be more anxious about his son than about the asses. **Leave caring**. The greater solicitude would destroy the lesser. **Take thought** is too mild. The word carries the sense of *anxiety* or *worry*; and that is not too strong to predicate of a father who feared that his son might be lost.

Saul goes to consult a seer, 9: 6-10.

6. **In this city**. The servant's remark implies that Samuel's abode was Zuph, the seat of his family, 1 : 1, and not Ramah as held in the later tradition, 7 : 17. It is interesting to note that it was the servant rather than Saul who knew about the seer, and who proposed a method which more cultivated people might deem superstitious. The servant urges as a reason for consulting the seer the latter's past successes, of which Saul is quite ignorant. The meaning is obviously not limited to accuracy of prediction, but covers a broad knowledge of the occult, such as would meet Saul's difficulty. **Peradventure** indicates less confidence that we should expect of the servant. The same phrase was used by the Philistine seers, 6 : 5. It is to be regarded as our *D. V.* The servant is sure that the seer can tell them where the lost asses are, and so indicate the course on which they should travel.

7. whereon we go. Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we? And the
8. servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have in my hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I<sup>1</sup> give to the man of God, to tell us our way.
9. (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, Come and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called

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<sup>1</sup> G. *thou shalt give.*

7. The text of this verse makes poor sense, as Saul first declares that there is nothing to serve as a fee for the seer, and then contradicts himself by asking the servant what they have. By the aid of Gr. it is possible to render the crucial part of the verse so as to make sense: *the bread is exhausted from our sacks, and what (else) we have will not serve as a fee for the man of God.* The word rendered *present* in the text is of unknown meaning, but the context suggests what is meant. Saul knows that a fee is expected for consultation with a seer, and in the low state of their resources cannot see whence a fee is to come.

8. **I have in my hand** is too exact. The Heb. may be better rendered *there is found in my possession*, or freely as in B. D. B., *I happen to have by me.* **Shekel** was a silver coin worth about 67 cents. This is one of the few Hebrew words quite adopted into English. The existence of the money was apparently unknown to Saul, and was the property of the servant, so that a slave might have possessions of his own. **Will I give.** By a change chiefly of pointing the Greek makes the servant offer the money to Saul that he may make the required payment.

9. **Inquire of God** and **go to the seer** are used here as synonymous terms, showing the popular esteem in which the seer was held. This verse was evidently written long after the event, for the change of name had already taken place. The seer of Samuel's day had become the prophet in the author's time. The verse is an annotation probably from a later hand. It is out of place here as neither *seer* nor *prophet* has yet been applied to the man of God. The explanation would be more suitable after v. 11.

10. a Seer.) Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the  
 11. man of God was. As they went up the ascent to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw  
 12. water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, *he is* before thee:<sup>1</sup> make haste<sup>2</sup> now, for he is come to-day into the city; for the people have a sacrifice to-day  
 13. in the high place: as soon as ye come into the city,

<sup>1</sup> G. correctly *you*.<sup>2</sup> Omitted in G.

10. **Well said.** Better, *good is thy plan*, as it covers approval of the suggestion to consult the seer and the offer of money to pay him. **The city** would be *Ramah*, according to 7 : 17; at all events it was in the land of *Zulph* and the home of Samuel's ancestors.

Saul meets Samuel at the gate of the city, 9 : 11-14.

11. **Ascent.** For better protection against enemies cities were built on high points, rarely in valleys. **To draw water.** The spring or well of course would be in the lower valleys, and all the water used had to be carried some distance up the hill. The drawing of the water was a part of the household work of women. The term suggests that they may have been slaves. **Here** or as we would say, *at home*.

12 f. The women answer the question at great length, giving an explanation of the custom at the feast, and especially indicating the prominent part assigned to the seer. **Before thee** suggests *in thy presence*, which cannot be right. The idea is *ahead of you* (for the plural should occur throughout). Samuel had gone into the city just ahead of Saul and his servant. **Make haste** has no fitness here, but may pass in view of the statement in v. 13 that the travellers will barely catch Samuel before he goes to the sacrifice. **High place** means a sanctuary upon a hill, here evidently higher than the city itself. From v. 22 it appears that there was a building here, marking the sanctuary as important. These high places came into disrepute with the later efforts to centralize the worship at the Jerusalem temple. **He doth bless the sacrifice** refers to a rite of which we have no other information. It was evidently deemed important, and to be most fitly performed only by the man of God. **They that be bidden**, or *guests*, often found at sacrificial meals, 1 Kings 1 : 41. Presumably the animals were furnished by one rich man, and the thirty partakers were his guests.



- ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; *and* afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get
14. you up; for at this time ye shall find him. And they went up to the city; *and* as they came within the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.
15. Now the LORD had revealed unto Samuel a day before
16. Saul came, saying, To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people

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14. **Within the city.** The Hebrew has *in the midst of the city*, in the central part. To agree with v. 18, and with the phrase *came out*, we should read as Driver suggests *in the middle of the gate*, i. e., *right at the gate*. As the travellers enter the gate, Samuel is coming out on his way to the sacrifice on the high place.

Jahveh's revelation to Samuel, 9 : 15-17

15 f. **Revealed**, lit. *uncovered the ear*, so that he could hear; probably originally referring to some unwinding of the turban which covered the head. **A day before** coupled with *to-morrow* in v. 16, shows that the revelation to Samuel came just when it was needed. **I will send thee.** Though Saul came to the city to get information which would lead to the discovery of his father's lost property, the writer conceives that it was the spirit of God that led him to the city of the Zuphites, and that is characteristic Hebrew theology. **Prince.** We note a different word from *king* in c. 8, but there is no difference indicated in the office. **Shall save my people.** The purpose for which the king is to be appointed agrees with one of the objects sought by the people in their demand, 8 : 20, though in the latter case it is stated in more general terms. But in this section the initiative is taken by Jahveh, and there is no hint of a displacement of Samuel, who here enters heartily into the task assigned him from on high. Samuel's office is not here conceived as political as in cc. 7, 8. He is a seer pure and simple, and assumes no authority over the people. **Looked upon**, or better with G. *I have beheld the affliction of my people*, cf. Ex. 3 : 7. The distress was caused by the grinding oppression of the Philistines, because of which the people cried out to heaven, and their cry was heard.

Israel, and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people,  
 17. because their cry is come unto me. And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man of whom I spake to thee! this same shall have author-  
 18. ity over my people. Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the  
 19. seer's house is. And Samuel answered Saul, and said,

17. **The Lord said**, literally *answered*, a word loosely used in Hebrew, but appropriate here, since Jahveh replies to the question in Samuel's mind, whether the stranger who comes in the gate was the one to whom the high office was to be committed. God leaves nothing to chance, but designates unmistakably the chosen man. **Have authority**. The Hebrew word means *restrain, shut up*, the very opposite of what the context demands. By a slight change we could get *save, deliver*, and that suits the passage better.

Saul is made chief guest at the sacred feast, 9 : 18-25.

18. **Where the seer's house is**. In spite of the almost suspiciously elaborate assurance of the women, evidently Saul expected to find Samuel at his home. Neither Saul nor the servant knew Samuel by sight, though the latter knew his reputation.

19 f. **I am the seer**, more than answers Saul's question, for meeting the seer, there is no need to find his house. **Go up before me**. The precedence accorded Saul suggests the high honor awaiting him. Saul had as yet no suspicion of anything other than the usual hospitality accorded to strangers. **In thine heart** = upon thy mind. Samuel does not wait for Saul to state the reason for his inquiry as to the location of the seer's house, but proceeds to take necessary steps to execute the mission which the Lord put into his hands. This task was one of great delicacy, as we shall see, and must be approached shrewdly. The first step is to get a personal hold on Saul. To accomplish this he pursues two lines: he detains him a day to insure a more intimate mutual acquaintance; and he impresses him with his power as a man of God, by disclosing the fact that he knows Saul's business without being told, v. 20, and by giving the information for which Saul had come, that the asses were found. This fact would relieve Saul's mind to a degree so that he was persuaded to delay even though there was no assurance of any relief to his father's anxiety. Such occult knowledge was considered proof of being a prophet, Lk. 7 : 39. The latter part of v. 20 is obscure, but it certainly forecasts somewhat vaguely the future honor of

- I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall <sup>1</sup> eat with me to-day: and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine
20. heart. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel?
21. Is it not for thee, and for all thy father's house? And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?
22. And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought

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<sup>1</sup> Better *thou shalt*.

Saul's house, and may be intended, as H. P. Smith suggests, to awaken his ambition. Budde ingeniously combines with preceding: "you do not need be troubled about the asses, since to you and your house shall belong all that is prized in Israel."

21. It is not necessary to suppose that Saul grasped the full import of the seer's words, but he must have perceived some mark of distinction. Saul's disclaimer of fitness cannot be taken too seriously: small tribes are not always the most modest, and Saul's father was a man of property, and appears to have been well known *cf.* Gideon's similar words, Judg. 6 : 15.

22. **Guest-chamber** to modern ears is suggestive of a sleeping room. The room here meant is one annexed to a temple in which the sacrificial meals were eaten. **In the chiefest place**, *lit. at the head of the guests*. The servant occupied a high place with his master, for social distinctions were not sharply drawn in old Israel. The place of honor was due to Saul's destined kingship.

23 f. **The cook**, but the term applies rather to the one who slays the animal than to the one who cooks it. Samuel had been advised of the coming of a Benjamite, and had directed that a specially choice or large portion of the sacrifice be reserved. If the women's saying was right that the meal would await Samuel's coming, such previous direction would only be explained as due to the tendency of the feasters to seek quickly for the best parts of the animal. **The thigh** was a choice and large portion. These men ate meat rarely, but on festive occasions devoured large portions. **That which was upon it**

them into the guest-chamber, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, 23. which were about thirty persons. And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, 24. of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. And the cook took up the thigh, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And *Samuel* said, Behold that which hath been reserved! set it before thee and eat; because unto the appointed time hath it been kept for thee, for I said, I have invited the people. So Saul 25. did eat with Samuel that day. And when they were come down from the high place into the city, he 26. communed with Saul <sup>1</sup> upon the housetop. And they

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<sup>1</sup> G. made a couch for Saul.

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is devoid of sense, and the Hebrew word quite impossible. A common emendation makes it *the fat tail*, a part of a sheep much prized as food. **That which hath been reserved** is a mistranslation. The word means *that which is left*, and would imply that the feast was over and Saul was given what the other guests had left over. H. P. Smith reads *flesh*, so we have *behold the meat, set it before thee and eat*. But the cook had already set the portion before Saul. **I have invited the people** makes no sense in this connection. The G. shows that the text has been badly corrupted. Smith, following Budde, emends to get: "for to the appointed time we have waited for thee to eat with the guests." It seems probable that Samuel means that being forewarned of the coming of a distinguished Benjamite on this day, he had prepared the feast and invited the guests in order to show honor to Saul. But the text is so bad it is impossible to clear up the details satisfactorily.

25. **He communed with Saul** is clear enough in itself, but it prepares the way badly for v. 26. With the G. we should read: *and they made a couch for Saul upon the roof, and he went to bed*. The communing came the next day.

Samuel secretly anoints Saul, 9 : 26-10 : 1

26. **They arose early** is quite impossible, standing before the statement that Samuel called Saul at dawn. The Gr. makes the matter clear; the Hebrew word by a slight change gets an opposite sense *he went to bed* and that belongs to v. 25. **The spring of the day**

- arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, 27. abroad. As they were going down at the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,<sup>1</sup>) but stand thou still at this time, that I may cause thee to hear the word of God.
10. Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that the LORD hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance? When thou art departed from me to-day,

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<sup>1</sup> Omit G.

refers to an early hour, the beginning of daylight. The significant interview with Saul was arranged for an hour when secrecy would be assured. **Abroad** conveys rather too wide a sense. The idea is that they went *outside*, i. e., of the house.

27. **The end of the city.** When the outskirts were reached there would be the assurance of that privacy which Samuel required. Even the servant was not to be admitted to the secret, and so he was directed to go on ahead so as to be out of hearing. Most Greek texts omit *and he passed on*, but one transposes it and contains an additional clause which appears to be authentic: *and Saul spoke to his servant, and he went on ahead of them.* **The word of God** is the revelation which had come to the seer two days before, v. 15 f.

10 : 1. Anointing with oil accompanied the induction to important offices. The kissing is apparently a mere act of greeting, and is not an act of homage. The fuller address to Saul preserved in G. is accepted by most scholars: *has not Jahveh anointed thee prince over his people Israel? and thou shalt rule over the people of the Lord and shalt save them from the hand of their enemies round about.*

The signs which confirm Samuel's act, 10 : 2-7.

2. The text has an abrupt beginning and leaves us to inference. Here again G. has preserved the true text, beginning: *And this shall be a sign unto thee that the Lord hath anointed thee as prince over his inheritance.* There were really three separate signs given, but all consist of the seer's foretelling the different bodies Saul would meet

then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and taketh thought for you, saying, What shall  
 3. I do for my son? Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the oak of Tabor, and there shall meet thee <sup>1</sup> there three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves <sup>2</sup> of bread, and another carrying a

<sup>1</sup> G. *thou shalt meet.*<sup>2</sup> G. *baskets.*

on his journey home. Saul must be convinced that he is not impelled to usurp authority by the advice of a man, but that Samuel is clothed with divine authority to direct him to undertake the hard task of delivering Israel from its foes. The prophet must support his word with a sign as evidence that he speaks with authority. **Rachel's sepulchre** is here plainly located in the land of Benjamin. From Gen. 35 : 19 f. this grave has been located at Bethlehem in Judah. As Rachel was the mother of Benjamin and Joseph (Ephraim), the natural place for her tomb would be on the border of these tribes. **Zelzah** has baffled all students from the Greek translators down. A closer definition of place seems hardly necessary here. From the fact that in the other signs there is specified something the men carry, it might be guessed that the original text had *with . . .*, the blank standing for some mark by which the two men might be identified. The men first declare what the seer had already told Saul, that the asses were found, and then what he had apprehended, 9 : 5 that his father's anxiety for him had become acute. It is assumed that these men will know Saul and the occasion of his journey, and they may have been sent out to search for him.

3 f. **Go on.** The word is otherwise used only in poetry, and conveys the idea of haste. Saul is bidden to move on quickly, presumably on account of his father's anxiety. **The oak of Tabor** is commonly identified with the oak of Deborah, which according to Gen. 35 : 8 was close to Bethel, where was an ancient sanctuary. **Skin** is a vessel to hold liquids and is made from the hide of an animal; its capacity was therefore indicated by the size of the animal. The meat, bread and wine show that the three men were going to Bethel for a sacred feast.



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4. bottle <sup>1</sup> of wine: and they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive
  5. of their hand. After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and
  6. they shall be prophesying: and the spirit of the LORD will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy
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<sup>1</sup> Or *skin*.

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4. **Loaves** has no corresponding word in the original, but is probably right. The bread would be very welcome inasmuch as Saul's was all gone, 9 : 7, and may be intended as an act of homage suggesting the kingly estate, and therefore Saul is directed to accept it. The salutation on the other hand may be no more than a friendly greeting. The many details are intended to enhance the value of the sign.

5 f. The third sign is elaborated because of the part the prophets play in it, because of the marked influence on Saul, and to explain a well known proverb, vs. 12, 19 : 24. **Hill of God** marks another stage on the journey home, but the locality cannot be identified. From 13 : 2 f. Gibeah of Benjamin may be meant. **Garrison** is doubtful; others argue for *pillar* or *deputy*, which the word may also mean. As Jonathan slew this thing, it is most probably a *deputy*, 13 : 3, as he would hardly have attacked a whole garrison single handed. **High place** as in 9 : 12 refers to a sanctuary, which was probably the home station of the company of prophets. This is the first mention of the prophetic bands or guilds, often as they are mentioned later. For further light on this order, consult my *Hebrew Prophet*, ch. 4. **Prophesying** may easily be defined in general terms from the context. From the description it is apparent that the four musical instruments at the head of the company were played and the rest of the band were indulging in some sort of vocal exercises, possibly some wild kind of chanting. Violent physical exertions were made, cf. 19 : 24. **Come mightily**. The word conveys rather the idea of suddenness than power; therefore *rush* is a better rendering, cf. Acts 2 : 2 f. Here the spirit of Jahveh induces a prophetic ecstasy. **Another man**. There is an intimation that the change will be permanent, cf. vs. 7: 16 : 14.

- with them, and shalt be turned into another man.
7. And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee.
8. And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come unto thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do. And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.

7. **As occasion serve thee**, or *as thy hand finds*. Saul is to be ready for any opportunity that comes in his way. He has been anointed king; the signs will have happened which prove that the anointing was of God; his falling into the prophetic frenzy is proof of the presence of the spirit of Jahveh. To make effective the will of God, by actually becoming king, he must seize an opportunity to perform a kingly act, an opportunity that comes in due season, c. 11. The judges reached their position as rulers by leading an uprising of the people against their enemy. It was in the same way that Samuel sees the kingdom must be won by Saul.

Saul among the prophets, 10 : 8-12.

8. Saul is directed to go to Gilgal, where Samuel promises to join him at the end of seven days to offer sacrifices and to direct him what to do. It is apparent that these injunctions are quite inconsistent with Samuel's instructions given above. Saul was given an absolutely free hand because God was with him, and he was to act when the occasion offered, and not to wait for Samuel or any other man. The verse is regarded as an interpolation preparing the way for 13 : 7-15. The paternal idea is akin to the other version of Saul's appointment.

9. **Another heart** or *understanding* of his true mission in life. Saul's mind was given a new idea by the prophet, and one that would affect his whole future. The clause is rejected by many critics on the ground that the change in Saul was to follow his prophesying, v. 6. The Hebrew phrase is unusual and awkward. **Came to pass**. We find here the general statement that all of Samuel's predictions were fulfilled in the course of the day, but in the narrative following nothing further is said about the first and second signs. The third only is described at length. It is possible, as Smith suggests, that

10. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a band of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came mightily<sup>1</sup> upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him before-

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<sup>1</sup> Heb. *rushed*.

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some of the story has been lost; but it may be that only that sign is detailed which had a marked influence upon Saul.

10. **The hill** = *hill of God*, in v. 5. **He prophesied among them, with them** in v. 6, but *among them*, or more literally *in their midst* conveys the true idea. Saul was surrounded by the band of prophets indulging in their exciting rites, and soon caught the contagion and leaped and whirled and shouted as wildly as any of them. Samuel's prediction that he would prophesy predisposed him to catch the frenzy, for it acted as a suggestion. A fuller description of Saul in the act of prophesying is found in 19 : 24. Such unusual actions were regarded as due to the presence of the spirit of God.

11 f. **All that knew him beforetime**. The place where Saul met the prophets was evidently close to his home; his family, in spite of his modest declaration, 9 : 21, was a prominent one in his neighborhood; therefore it is not surprising that at this point some of Saul's personal acquaintances were present; but whether they were part of the band of prophets, or a curious crowd, following and watching the prophetic rhapsodies, it is impossible to say. If the question in v. 12 is authentic, the latter alternative would be the more probable. **Who is their father?** This phrase breaks the connection, and is often interpreted as a gloss. But it is hard to see why any scribe should work it into the text here, little connection as it has. It cannot refer to Saul's father, as G. implies, for Saul's parentage was well known. *Father* may be used in an ecclesiastical sense and means the chief of the prophetic band. **Is Saul among the prophets?** The people that knew him were naturally surprised to see him indulging in such antics as characterized these prophetic bands. It would be quite as unusual as for a Quaker to let himself go at an evangelical revival. It was entirely out of keeping with Saul's well known character. We need not assume with Smith that Saul's life had been profligate to explain the strange company he was now keeping. It suffices to assume that he was reserved and proud, and that it was deemed a strange lapse of dignity to rave with the prophets. Later these prophets were rather looked down upon, but they were a new element at this period. **Proverb**. The saying is traced to another incident in 19 : 24, though of the same kind; it was applied to any case of a man found in unexpected company.

- time saw that, behold, he prophesied with the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the 12. prophets? And one of the same place <sup>1</sup> answered and said, And who is their <sup>2</sup> father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?
13. And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.
14. And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that they were not found, we came 15. to Samuel. And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray 16. thee, what Samuel said unto you. And Saul said

<sup>1</sup> For the same place G. has *them*.<sup>2</sup> G. his.

Saul's interview with his uncle, 10 : 13-16.

13. **The high place.** Saul was to meet the prophets coming down from the high place, v. 5. and the text indicates that after the ecstasy was over he went on up to the sanctuary. Wellhausen reads *his home*; but Saul was not at home, for his uncle knew nothing about the journey, as he certainly would if he had been at Saul's home. He went to the sanctuary for religious purposes, natural under the circumstances, and found his uncle there. If he had been home, the interview would naturally have been with his father. It would be better to read with Budde after G. *to Gibeah*, Saul's home town, in which place the uncle might live without knowing of Saul's wanderings.

14. **Saul's uncle.** This was apparently *Ner*, the father of Abner, 14 : 50. **They were not found** gives poor sense, and is a bad translation. The phrase is literally, *and we saw that they were not* (when he hunted for them), or more freely *we did not see them*.

It appears that *Ner* knows that Samuel is a seer credited with power as a soothsayer, and he was curious to know whether valuable information has been forthcoming. The fact that *Ner* knows about Samuel has given rise to question about the passage, but the seer's light may not have been so hid under a bushel after all. If Saul's servant is well informed about Samuel, his uncle might be too.

16. **Plainly** does not express the idea as well as *positively*. Saul gives his uncle the essential information for which he asked. Saul

unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But concerning the matter of the kingdom,<sup>1</sup> whereof Samuel spake,<sup>1</sup> he told him not.

3. *The later story continued, 10 : 17-27*

17. And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD  
 18. to Mizpah; and he said unto the children of Israel,  
 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, I brought up  
 Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you out of the  
 hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the  
 19. kingdoms that oppressed you: but ye have this day

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<sup>1</sup> Omit with G.

had gone to Samuel to learn where the asses were, and Samuel told him that they were recovered, and that serves to show that his powers were real. The matter of the kingdom was a profound secret, even from the servant, and Saul rightly withhold any word about it. It follows that he said nothing about the signs or his indulgence in the prophetic rites.

At a national assembly which Samuel calls at Mizpah, Saul is chosen by lot to serve as king of Israel. This is a direct continuation of ch. 8, where Samuel granted the request of the elders who had assembled to demand a king. Now a national assembly is held and the promise is carried out. 10 : 7-27.

17. **Called.** The Hebrew has a peculiar word implying distress. There may be a subtle hint of Samuel's distress in assembling the people to perform an office contrary to the will of God. **Mizpah.** The conference with the elders had been held at Ramah, Samuel's home. Now a more sacred place is chosen, the same sacred spot as in ch. 7 and Judg. 20.

18. Samuel repeats to the whole nation the objections to the kingdom which he had stated to the elders in ch. 8. **The kingdom that oppressed you.** Coming after Egypt we might think of Og the king of Bashan and Sihon the king of the Amorites; but the word *oppressed* rather limits the meaning to the various nations whose struggles with Israel are recorded in the book of Judges.

19. **Rejected God** by demanding a king to take the place of his direct rule. The elders who had demanded a king represented the whole nation and so Samuel holds the people guilty. **Unto him** cannot be right. The elders asked the king of Samuel, not of God. The

rejected your God, who himself saveth you out of all your calamities and your distresses; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, 20. and by your thousands. So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was 21. taken. And he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their families, and the family of the Matrites was taken: and Saul the son of Kish was taken; but when 22. they <sup>1</sup> sought him, he could not be found. Therefore

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<sup>1</sup> G. *he*, i. e., Samuel.

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ancient versions all read *no*, which is interpolated in the Revised version. **Before the Lord**, for the choice was to be made by the sacred lot. **Thousands** is a term used for a subdivision of the tribe, like *clan*. Judg. 6 : 15. It means the same as *family* in v. 21. The meaning must be that the people were to come by tribes, but with each tribe arranged by clans so as to be ready for the second casting of the lot. It is not stated exactly how the choosing was accomplished, for **brought the tribes near**, v. 20, is indefinite but it must have been done by names, for Saul was finally chosen though he was not present at the time the lot fell on him.

21. **Matrites** is a name that occurs nowhere else. It must have been the clan in which Kish was a prominent figure. The verse contains an obvious gap which must be supplied from G. *and he brought near the family of the Matrites man by man, and Saul*, etc. **Sought him**, to anoint him king, therefore the Greek reading *he sought him* is preferable.

22. A further inquiry was necessary on account of Saul's absence, but the question in the text is too vague to meet the situation. Moreover, the answer implies a direct question about Saul. The people were at the moment concerned only with the whereabouts of the king designated by the lot. G. preserves the true form: *has the man come here*, i. e., has the chosen one gathered with the people, or is he absent as David was later? **Hid himself**. Smith says out of modesty, similarly Budde; but if Saul had hid himself out of modesty because he was chosen king, he must have been present when the lot was cast, and in that case all of his acquaintances would know that he was near by, and there would be no need to inquire of God. The text may be rendered, *he is hidden among the stuff*, not meaning



- they <sup>1</sup> asked of the LORD further, Is there yet a man to come hither? And the LORD answered, Behold, he
23. hath hid himself among the stuff. And they ran and fetched him thence; and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his
24. shoulders and upward. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.
25. Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every
26. man to his house. And Saul also went to his house to Gibeah; and there went with him the host,<sup>2</sup> whose

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<sup>1</sup> G. *Samuel*.

<sup>2</sup> G. *the sons of valor*.

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that Saul had gone into concealment after the lots were cast, but that he had been out of sight among the impedimenta of the company. He may have been taking care of the supplies of his own family.

24. **None like him.** Saul's great size would make him particularly desirable as a leader in war; *cf.* the terror inspired by Goliath's immense stature, ch. 17. **God save the king** is the corresponding English idiom: the Heb. is an exact equivalent to the French form *vive le roi*.

25. **Manner of the kingdom.** This refers to Samuel's forecast of what the king would do, 8 : 11 ff. The prediction was written and preserved to serve as a witness against the people when they cried out on account of the oppression. It is held that by many the rest of the chapter is a later addition to make a suitable connection with c. 11, in which Saul appears as a private citizen. The narrative does not contain anything unsuitable in itself.

26. **To his house,** for there was no other place for Saul to go. There was no state capital, or palace, or throne. **The host** or *army* implies rather more of an organization than existed at the time. The Greek reading contrasts well with *sons of Belial* in v. 27. Saul the chosen of the Lord was followed to his home by a company of valiant men whom he could readily organize into an army.

27. hearts God had touched. But certain sons of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no present. But he held his peace.

#### 4. *The Earlier Story, Continued*, Ch. 11

11. Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us,  
2. and we will serve thee. And Nahash the Ammonite

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27. **Sons of Belial**, cf. 1 : 16. These men are deemed worthless because they stand in opposition to the majority of the people, and yet their position is essentially the same as Samuel's, but Samuel accepted the counsel of God, however grudgingly, but these people did not. We must suppose either that the demand for a king was not unanimous, or that these men belonged to another tribe and were jealous of Benjamin's glory. **Present**. Offerings would be due to the king even though taxes were not imposed. **Held his peace**. The correct rendering is *he was like one holding his peace*, and this does not fit here. It is better to read as G. *and it came to pass after a month*, and to preface to ch. 11.

Saul gathers an army and relieves Jabesh-gilead, 11 : 1-11. Saul had been sent home to await an opportunity. After about a month (cf. note on 10 : 27), Nahash the Ammonite afforded him the desired chance.

1. **Nahash** was the king of Ammon, 12 : 12. Later he showed some favor to David, 2 Sam. 10 : 2. **Encamped against** is equivalent to *besieged* as the inhabitants evidently could not get away. **Jabesh-gilead** lay on the east of the Jordan. The town was apparently peculiarly bound to the tribe of Benjamin, Judg. 21 : 8 ff., and by this act to Saul 31 : 11-13. **Make a covenant**. The Jabesh-gileadites realized that they were no match for the powerful force which had besieged them, and therefore they ask for terms of surrender. It appears from the condition imposed by Nahash that their main concern was to save their lives. A conquered people would be likely to be either massacred or sold as slaves.

2. **Your right eyes be put out**. Josephus understood the motive to be the rendering of the men unfit for war. Nahash explains his object quite differently. Mutilation of prisoners is not uncommon

- said unto them, On this condition will I make it with you, that all your right eyes be put out; and I will lay
3. it for a reproach upon all Israel. And the elders<sup>1</sup> of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the borders of Israel: and then, if there be none to save us, we will
  4. come out to thee. Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and spake these words in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voice,
  5. and wept. And, behold, Saul came following the oxen

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<sup>1</sup> G. *men* as in v. 1.

among primitive peoples, Judg. 1 : 6 f., 2 Kings 25 : 7. **Reproach** or *disgrace*, for the infliction upon the people of one town would be a sign of the impotence of Israel. Israel's fortunes at the time were in a desperate state.

3. **Seven days' respite.** As Jabesh was on the east of the Jordan, and far away from the center of Israel, it would take some time to make the rounds in their effort to procure assistance.

4. Nahash's acceptance of the counter proposal is implied. An addition in one of the Greek texts suggests that there is a gap in the narrative here. That text rounds out the story by saying: *and the men of Jabesh-gilead sent forth messengers. Gibeah of Saul. G. to Gibeah for Saul*, but that is obviously to harmonize better with 8, 10 : 17-27; these messengers knew nothing about Saul. **Of Saul** reflects the point of view of a later day, for Saul's name would no more be attached to the town now than in ch. 9. It is probable that the messengers went directly to the tribe of Benjamin with whom they had affiliations (*cf.* note on v. 1), and Gibeah may have been the first place where these heavy tidings were told. **Wept.** Evidently the men of Gibeah felt that they were helpless. The fact that Nahash had accepted the terms of the men of Jabesh shows his confidence that succor could not be found in Israel; but he did not know of the oil that had been poured upon the head of Saul by the seer of Rama. The Israelites were plainly at this time but a feeble folk, and there was no system of regular concerted action among the tribes.

5. **Following the oxen.** Saul had evidently been working in the field, probably plowing. The messengers had not asked for him, his own townspeople did not tell him the cause of the commotion until he asked. Nobody thought of Saul as a king, and this story is manifestly quite independent of 10 : 17-27.

out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the words of the 6. men of Jabesh. And the spirit of God came mightily<sup>1</sup> upon Saul when he heard those words, and his anger 7. was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the borders of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the dread of the LORD fell on the people, and they 8. came out as one man. And he numbered them in Bezek; and the children of Israel were three hundred

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<sup>1</sup> Or *rushed*.

6. **The Spirit of God** leads men to do many things; it had brought on the ecstatic state, 10 : 10, now it rouses Saul to anger and to action. He sees now the occasion for which Samuel had bid him wait.

7. **Cut them in pieces.** The sending of such pieces seems to be a regular means of calling the people to war, *cf.* the case of the concubine whose body was thus disposed of, Judg. 19 : 29. Robertson Smith supposes this to have had originally a sacramental sense (*Religion of the Semites*, 383), but in the case before us the purpose is plainly to convey a threat. **Messengers.** The Hebrew has *the messengers* implying that Saul employed for his purpose the men who had come from Jabesh-gilead. This is probably correct, for these messengers did not return until Saul's army was assembled. **And after Samuel** appears to be an addition to harmonize with the later conception of Samuel's supreme leadership. Samuel told Saul to act when occasion offered, and never intimated that he would join him. In this early source Samuel is conceived as a seer, not as a warrior. **So shall it be done.** Saul threatens to slay the oxen of all Israelites who do not gather for the war. The pieces of flesh carried by the messengers add a touch of realism to the menace. **Dread of the Lord**, i. e., from the Lord. Saul had not **threatened** in the name of Jahveh, but he was acting for him, and so the fear that Saul's threat inspired was terror of the Lord. **As one man**, all acting from the same impulse of fear.

8. **Numbered**, or better *mustered*, as the word refers to the gathering of the forces, not to counting them. **Bezek** is mentioned else-

thousand, and the men of Judah thirty<sup>1</sup> thousand.  
 9. And they<sup>2</sup> said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have deliverance. And the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh;  
 10. and they were glad. Therefore the men of Jabesh said,<sup>3</sup> To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye  
 11. shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you. And

<sup>1</sup> G. *seventy*<sup>2</sup> G. *rightly he.*<sup>3</sup> G. *to Nahash the Ammonite.*

where only in Judg. 1:4. It has been located between Shechem and Beth-shean, and therefore nearly opposite Jabesh-gilead across the Jordan. When Saul sent out his messengers, he probably appointed the place for the warriors to assemble, and the time, which must have been very short in view of the seven days' respite. The figures are late and exaggerated. Probably v. 8b is a gloss. Judah was not involved in this affair.

9. **To-morrow.** It was probably the sixth day since the armistice had been arranged, for Saul would take as much time in preparation as possible, and there was at best but a short space available. **The time the sun is hot** indicates a period fairly early in the morning, perhaps an hour or two after sunrise, *cf.* Neh. 7:3. **Were glad.** Saul did not send the messengers back until they were able to report that they had seen an ample force collected for the rescue. The Jabesh-gileadites therefore had good ground for joy.

10. The messengers reached home the same day and their fellows promise to surrender the very time at which deliverance is expected. The declaration to Nahash indicates that their mission was a failure, and that as he had forecasted, help could not be found. The object of the deception, and its justification, was to throw the enemy off his guard so that Saul's force could catch him unprepared.

11. **And it was so,** better the common *and it came to pass.* **On the morrow.** Saul's army moved from Bezek to Jabesh in the night, but as the Jewish day began at sunset the phrase is correct. **Three companies.** Such an arrangement was the common method of attack, 13:17, Judg. 7:16, 9:43, Job 1:17. The object was to strike on three sides, surrounding the foe so that escape was impossible. **The morning watch** was the third and last watch of the night, about 2 to 6 a. m. The battle began presumably about daybreak and lasted till about noon, for **the heat of the day** indicates a later hour than the time when the sun is hot, v. 9. Saul took the Ammonites unawares;

it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp <sup>1</sup> in the morning watch, and smote the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two  
 12. of them were not left together. And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? <sup>2</sup> bring the men, that we may put them to  
 13. death. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put

<sup>1</sup> G. of the Ammonites.<sup>2</sup> G. Saul shall not reign over us.

they were fallen upon suddenly at dawn on all sides, being probably aroused from their sleep by the assault; the Jabesh-gileadites doubtless emerged from the city and shared in the slaughter. **Remained were scattered.** The passage must be rendered: *and it came to pass that there were survivors, and they were scattered.* There were some who survived the deadly onslaught, breaking through the attacking lines, but these were pursued so relentlessly, that only those escaped who were alone and so could successfully hide from their pursuers.

Saul becomes king of Israel, 11 : 12-15.

This section has been worked over by compilers until it is scarcely recognizable, and the whole is questioned by many scholars. There seems to be a reference to the disaffection in 10 : 27, which does not fit into this story. The original must have related in a simple way how the people offered the kingdom to their victorious leader as it had formerly been given to Gideon under similar circumstances, Judg. 9 : 22. In the original story Samuel could have had no place, for he had already anointed Saul, and thus his work was done; v. 15 is usually regarded as authentic.

12. **Unto Samuel** has probably been added for harmonistic purposes. **Shall Saul reign over us?** implies that at the close of Saul's brilliant campaign, the people proposed to make him king because he had showed himself to be what was sorely needed, a capable leader in war, but that there was some opposition which it was proposed to crush summarily. It is perfectly possible to translate as an affirmation, *Saul shall reign over us*, in which case a minority proposed Saul's elevation, and they were regarded as traitors worthy of death.

13. As usually interpreted Saul's decree shows magnanimity towards those opposed to his rule, a very different spirit from that shown later towards David. If the clause in v. 12 is interpreted affirmatively, then Saul's words mean that he will brook no opposition



to death this day: for to-day the LORD hath wrought deliverance in Israel.

14. Then said Samuel to the people, Come and let us go  
15. to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

5. *Conclusion of the later account of Saul's elevation,*  
Ch. 12. (Cf. 8. 10: 17-27)

12. And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto  
2. me, and have made a king over you. And now,

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from even the large number standing against the kingdom. **Saul said.** If our passage were authentic we should have *Samuel* as is found in some Greek texts. **The Lord hath wrought.** The Lord has shown his favor to Saul and to Israel, and therefore there must be no civil strife, or opposition to the plain will of God, as shown in this deliverance, that Saul shall be king.

14. **Renew the kingdom** implies a previous act of a similar kind, thus showing the verse to be an editorial addition.

15. After the battle the kingdom was offered to Saul and of course accepted by him. There needed only the public acclamation. There is no mention of anointing, save in the edited text of G. because this act had already been performed, 10 : 1.

Samuel's farewell address, ch. 12.

In laying down his office in view of the newly appointed king, Samuel forces an admission of the righteousness of his rule; he points out how Jahveh has helped the people in the past; and assures them that his help will be continued, in spite of their wrong in demanding a king, a wrong attested by a sign, if they serve him faithfully. The passage represents Samuel as the absolute ruler of the people, and so is connected with 7, 8, 10 : 17-27. It has often been compared with Joshua's farewell address, Josh. 24.

1. **Unto all Israel.** In 10 : 25 f. the people had been sent to their homes, while here they are all in the presence of the great leader. Such notices, however, are due to the compiler to fit his peculiar

- behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and gray-headed; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my youth unto
3. this day. Here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith? and I

combinations. This address follows 10:24 most fitly. **Ye said unto me** shows that the narrative belongs to that document in which the people had demanded a king.

2. **I am old and gray-headed.** This statement agrees with the corresponding picture of Samuel, 8:5. There is no intimation in c. 9 that Samuel was old. **My sons are with you.** After what the people had said about his sons in ch. 8, it is surprising that Samuel should mention them here. Smith suggests that the presence of these adult sons reinforces the idea of Samuel's age. But grown sons do not necessarily involve decrepitude in the father. The meaning is probably that another generation is to the fore, and the aged Samuel is rejected as belonging to the past. **Walked before** is used twice in this verse to convey the idea of leadership. **From my youth** connects this narrative with a part of the section chs. 1-3 in which Samuel became a national figure while still young. **Unto this day** indicates rather pathetically the end of the old man's administration.

3. **Before the Lord** is like our expression *under oath*. The anointed is Saul the newly made king; he stands parallel to Jahveh, because he is Jahveh's representative. **Whose ox.** The questions asked suggest the sort of things that were too commonly done by judges. **Ransom** is a technical term, especially referring to a sum paid in expiation of a murder. Samuel then means that he has never allowed a murderer to purchase his freedom from the penalty belonging to his crime. G. reads *ransom and a pair of shoes*, which in spite of Am. 2:6 is an anticlimax. G. lacks the clause *to blind mine eyes therewith*, but has for one part *a pair of shoes* as explained above and for the rest *testify against me*. The latter reading is a good introduction to the last clause: after making his sweeping challenge, Samuel says, *establish against me a single case in which any unlawful perquisite has come into my hand, and I will pay it back*. Restitution was a common penalty in Hebrew law.

4. will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken  
 5. aught of any man's hand. And he <sup>1</sup> said unto them, <sup>2</sup>  
 The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is  
 witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my  
 6. hand. And they said, He is witness. And Samuel  
 said unto the people, It is the LORD that appointed  
 Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up  
 7. out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore stand still,  
 that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning  
 all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to  
 8. you and to your fathers. When Jacob was <sup>3</sup> come into  
 Egypt, <sup>4</sup> and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then

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<sup>1</sup> G. Samuel.      <sup>2</sup> G. the people.      <sup>3</sup> G. Jacob and his sons were.      <sup>4</sup> G. adds: and the Egyptians oppressed them.

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4. Samuel is pronounced free of wrong, the people partly quoting his words, partly summarizing.

5. **Witness against** hardly conveys the right sense, for as the people acquitted Samuel of blame, there could be no witness against them. The meaning is that Jahveh is witness to their words, and will be against them if they ever bring charges against Samuel, as for example when he is dead. Jahveh was a witness to the public declaration that the people had *not found aught in his hand*, that is anything wrongfully taken from another.

6. Even with the amplification in our version the verse has no connection. In the Greek text it becomes the solemn ending to the justification of Samuel: *Jahveh that appointed Moses, etc, is witness.*

7. **Stand still** does not convey the right idea. Samuel is to bring an indictment against the people, therefore we should render *stand forth*, or *take your stand*. The people could not accuse their deposed leader, but he could accuse them, and so calls upon them to take their stand for defense. **Plead with you** or much better, *bring charges against you*. The colorless rendering of R.V. is made necessary by the gap in the text supplied by G. which reads, *I will relate to you*, instead of *concerning*.

8. **Made them dwell** has as its subject **Moses and Aaron**, but these leaders did not bring the people to **this place**. With G. we should read *he [Jahveh] made them dwell in this place*.

the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them to dwell in  
 9. this place. But they forgot the LORD their God, and he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host <sup>1</sup> of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they  
 10. fought against them. And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served the Baalim and the Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our  
 11. enemies, and we will serve thee. And the LORD sent

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds of *Jabin the king*.

9. **Sold** is a peculiar term in this connection, and literally of course is incorrect. The word is frequently employed in the same construction, Judg. 2 : 14, 3 : 8. The idea is based on the practice of selling captives as slaves. **Philistines** is named in the wrong place chronologically, as these people were Israel's latest enemies. The narrative implies that the deliverance from the Philistines was complete and thus shows its affinity to ch 7.

11. **Bedan** is never mentioned elsewhere, and the name is certainly wrong, for there are enumerated here only the conspicuous deliverers. Some have followed G. adopting **Barak** who overthrew Sisera, and in view of the mention of that king in v. 9. the guess is quite probably correct. Inasmuch as the king of Moab is also named among the oppressors, Ehud may be the hero intended. **Samuel** could hardly thus allude to himself. The presence of the name is explained as due to the fact that the late writer who composed this address forgot that Samuel was speaking. One text of G. reads *Samson*, which may be a correction, but it may be right as the Philistines, with whom Samson forgot, are named in v. 9. In any case the list of heroes should correspond with the list of oppressors from whom the heroes delivered Israel. If the list of nations is correct, the heroes should be Barak, Samson and Ehud. **In safety**. Samuel cites cases enough to show that Jahveh sent his servants to rescue Israel whenever they cried out for help in their distress, and that each succeeding oppression was due to the fact that Israel never learned its lesson, but returned to wrongdoing the moment they were safe.

- Jerubbaal, and Bedan,<sup>1</sup> and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on
12. every side, and ye dwelled in safety. And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God was your
13. king. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen,<sup>2</sup> and whom ye have asked for: <sup>2</sup> and, behold,
14. the LORD hath set a king over you. If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and hearken unto his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and both ye and also the king that reigneth over you
15. be followers of the LORD your God, *well*: but if ye will not hearken unto the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall

<sup>1</sup> G. *Barak*.<sup>2</sup> Omitted in G.

12. The statement here is very inaccurate in several respects. Nahash never attacked Israel as a whole, but only a small town across the Jordan; when he did invest Jabesh-gilead, nobody asked for a king, but the besieged sought for warriors to come to their relief; the people asked for a king in ch. 8, because Samuel was old and his sons corrupt. The writer has introduced the incident to harmonize with the story in c. 11.

13. The verse is redundant, and the latter part is explained as an exegetical gloss.

14. We have an elaborate protasis, but the necessary apodosis is lacking, and is but weakly supplied by the interpolated *well*. It is much better to read with G. (Lucian's text): *then he will succour you*. That conclusion agrees better with v. 15 than Smith's proposal *then ye shall live*. The people had not died under oppression; their dread was bondage, not death.

15. The antithesis is not complete, as some of the terms of v. 14 are lacking. **As it was against your fathers** cannot be wrested from the text, which can be rendered only *and against your fathers*. This translation is absurd, and we must read with G. *and against your king to destroy you*, and thus we have sense and harmony with v. 14.

the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against  
 16. your fathers. Now therefore stand still and see this  
 great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.  
 17. Is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto the  
 LORD, that he may send thunder and rain; and ye  
 shall know and see that your wickedness is great,  
 which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking  
 18. you a king. So Samuel called unto the LORD; and  
 the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the  
 19. people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. And all  
 the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants  
 unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have  
 20. added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king. And

16. **This great thing** is the thunderstorm described in v. 18.

17. **Thunder**, literally *voices*. The thunder is called the *voice of Jahveh* in Ps. 29. **Ye shall know and see**. The verbs are imperatives and it is better to render literally *and know and see*. A thunderstorm is of course a natural phenomenon, but it was to serve as a divinely given sign that Israel had committed a sin in asking a king, a point Samuel never wearies of driving home. The miraculous element consists in the storm's coming at an unheard of season, Prov. 26 : 1. The wheat harvest occurs in early summer, the dry season when rain rarely falls in Palestine. **In asking**. It is interesting to note that *Saul* means *asked*. There seems to be a tendency to play upon the name of the king.

18. **Feared**. The effect upon the people was due to the unusual phenomenon of rain in the dry season, for which both Jahveh and Samuel get credit. The storm was a sign of the displeasure of Jahveh and of his prophet.

19. **Die not**, better *and do not let us die*. The idea of death may have been suggested by the thunderstorm, of which many people are afraid; but any unwonted manifestation of the power of God awakened the fear of death, Judg. 13 : 22. The last clause should be rendered *inasmuch as to all our sins we have added a wrong in asking for us a king*. The miracle convinces the people that Samuel was just in condemning their demand, and they can now only appeal to God's mercy.

20. **Turn not aside**. Insistent as Samuel is in proclaiming the sin



Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have indeed done all this evil: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; 21. and turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go* after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are 22. vain. For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD 23. to make you a people unto himself. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will instruct you in 24. the good and the right way. Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for con-

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of the people, he does not make the wrong a ground for alienation from God. On the contrary he urges fervently that the people shall now serve God wholeheartedly.

21. By the interjection of a single superfluous word the text is corrupted thus leading to the interpolation of several others in our version. We should render: *but do not turn aside after vain things which cannot profit*, etc. Then we have a good sequel to v. 20: if the people turn away from Jahveh they will turn to those idols which can give man no hope. The word rendered *vain things* means a barren waste in Gen. 1:2, indicating the condition of the earth before it had form and life. Here it means the false gods who are barren wastes and have no life in themselves.

22. **Name's sake.** If Jahveh would cast off his people on account of their sins, he still would be restrained in order to preserve his own reputation. This conception belongs to a late period in Hebrew thought, Joel 2:17, Ps. 42:3, 10.

23. **Ceasing to pray.** Samuel now answers the people's request that he should pray that they might not die on account of their sins, v. 19. The fact that God answered his prayer by sending the storm reveals the power of his prayers. Samuel's words show that he feels the responsibility of the prophet even though deposed as a civil ruler. In spite of his age he will continue to teach the people the right way of living.

24. This verse presumably gives at least in substance "the good and right way"; it is like most great things capable of very simple statement. Fearing and serving comprise the religious and the ethical. Samuel insists in his teaching upon the reward which God

25. sider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ve and your king.

### III. THE REIGN OF SAUL, CHS. 13-31

#### I. *The First Stage: War with the Philistines and Amelekites,* Chs. 13-15

13. <sup>1</sup> Saul was [*thirty*] years old when he began to reign;  
2. and he reigned two years over Israel. And Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mount of Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in

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<sup>1</sup> V. 1 lacking in G.

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gives to those who serve him faithfully. The **great things** should refer to the favors which have come to Israel. But a strict construction of the words would make the clause refer to the thunderstorm, whence Budde infers that it is a gloss. It certainly is not needed.

25. **Consumed.** The word sometimes means *killed in battle* and that may be the sense here, the reference being to the disaster which befell Saul and his army on Mt. Gilboa, ch. 31.

To this point Nowack transposes 10 : 25-27, describing the sending of the people to their homes. It is undoubtedly much more suitable here than where it stands.

#### (1) *Saul's war with the Philistines*

Chs. 13, 14 are the sequel to ch. 11 and belong to the source T. They describe the first campaign in which the new king battles with Israel's foes.

Jonathan starts a war with the Philistines, vs. 1-7a.

1. The text reads, **Saul was . . . years old when he began to reign.** The whole verse is an editorial attempt to introduce Saul's reign after the custom of the compiler of Kings, giving the king's age at his accession and the length of his reign. But we have no figure in the first place, and in the second **two** is altogether too small. **Thirty** which comes from minor Greek texts, is too young, as Jonathan is a grown man.

2. The narrative is resumed from ch. 11. After the defeat of the

- Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he
3. sent every man to his tent. And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land,<sup>1</sup> saying, Let the Hebrews hear.
  4. And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were gathered together after Saul to Gilgal.

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<sup>1</sup> *G. the slaves have revolted.*

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Ammonites Saul was publicly proclaimed as king. Now he must turn his attention to the enemy which for a long period had tyrannized over the central tribes on the west of the Jordan. To meet this issue he picks out three thousand men to serve as an army, and divides his force into two sections. His own headquarters are established at **Michmash** and **Bethel**, and **Jonathan** was stationed on the south of the pass in **Gibeah** or Geba. The forces were distributed so as to guard the pass. **To his tent** shows the preservation of terms from the nomadic state, when the tent was the home.

3. **Garrison** is not right; *deputy* is doubtless the correct term. The deputy was a Philistine officer assigned to govern the subjugated people, so in v. 4; *cf.* note on 10:5. Why Jonathan slew the Philistine officer is uncertain, but as Saul's raising an army discloses an intention to revolt against the oppressor, Jonathan may have acted to delay news of the uprising from reaching the Philistines. The rest of the verse is difficult, for Saul would not use the term **Hebrews**, and as Saul had just sent the people home, retaining an armed force, he would hardly call them out now. Therefore Smith omits this clause, and adopting G., gets good sense: **and the Philistines heard as follows: the slaves [or Hebrews] have revolted.** Then Saul sounded the call to arms.

4. **Saul had smitten.** The king gets credit or blame for the deeds of subordinates, and so in the report spread over the land Jonathan's act is ascribed to Saul. **Had in abomination** better *in bad odor*, on account of the revolt. The Israelites knew that the Philistines would send a punitive force, and were doubtless in terror. *Gilgal* is impossible here, for Saul and Jonathan were at the pass of Michmash, and the terrified Israelites did not join his force at this time. *Gilgal* is named to prepare the way for the interpolated story in v. 7b ff.

5. And the Philistines assembled themselves together to fight with Israel,<sup>1</sup> thirty<sup>2</sup> thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and
6. pitched in Michmash, eastward of Beth-aven.<sup>3</sup> When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks,
7. and in holds, and in pits. Now some of the Hebrews had gone over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead; but as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds: *and there went up against Israel.*

<sup>2</sup> G. *three.*

<sup>3</sup> G. *Beth-horon.*

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5. The numbers are doubtless greatly exaggerated, possibly through copyists' errors. Doubtless the hostile forces looked big to Israel. The Philistines gathered hard by the heights held by Saul and Jonathan.

6, 7a. **Men of Israel** seems to indicate a different class from *the people*. The former may be the troops. **Distressed** or rather *oppressed*, indicates the condition resulting from the Philistine tyranny. G. has a different reading, though its meaning is obscure, and our text may be corrupt. The people hid in order to keep out of the way of the invaders who would indulge in promiscuous slaughter. **Holds**. The original apparently means tombs cut in the rocks or as Driver suggests "an underground vault." To find even a safer refuge some fled over the Jordan. This passage, like vs. 19-22, shows how the Hebrews had been treated by their powerful foe.

Saul denounced by Samuel. vs. 7b-15a. It is universally recognized that we have in this section an interpolated passage from another source. Samuel reappears as the theocratic ruler, and is irreconcilably hostile to the kingdom. Gilgal again becomes the scene of action, whereas before and after Saul is at Michmash. The story interrupts the description of the Philistine campaign. It belongs to the type we find in ch. 8, and is parallel to ch. 15. It may have been inserted here to show that the oldest narrative also had an account of Saul's deposition.

7b f. **Followed him trembling** may mean "sought him for protection *in their fear*" (Budde). The sense is certainly that the people

8. And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed*; but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.
9. And Saul said, Bring hither the burnt offering to me, and the peace offerings. And he offered the burnt
10. offering. And it came to pass that, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that
11. he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines

who were with Saul were in a state of great terror. **Seven days** connects this event with 10 : 8, a passage perhaps interpolated to provide a suitable setting for this story. **Were scattered.** On account of their fear of the Philistines Saul's forces rapidly melted away. It was the danger of being left alone against the enemy that forced Saul to act.

9. The sacrifice was to be offered to secure the favor of Jahveh, so that he would aid in battle, *cf.* 7 : 9 f. Such religious ceremonies led to the common phrase consecrate war, Jer. 6 : 4, Mic. 3 : 5. The idea was the consecration of the warriors (Smith, *Relig. Sem.* 383). Among the Arabs blood from the sacrificial animals was sprinkled on the tents of the warriors. Saul probably felt that after their consecration the troops would cease deserting.

10. The Hebrew loves these dramatic scenes, Samuel appearing at the moment Saul had completed his offense, *cf.* Job 1 : 16 ff. **To meet him** ignores the fact that Samuel had arrived actually upon the scene; it is therefore better to read *went towards him to greet him* with the customary blessing.

11 f. Samuel straightway accuses Saul by his question, and Saul realizes that he had committed an offense, and offers a lengthy explanation. In 10 : 8 Samuel said he would come to Gilgal to make the offerings and directed Saul to wait for him seven days. The king had waited the allotted time, but the prophet did not keep the tryst, and in this respect Samuel was at fault. But his failure is not regarded as an alleviation of the king's wrong, which consisted in his offering the sacrifice. Saul pleads that his army was rapidly deserting, that he might be attacked without properly consecrating

12. assembled themselves together at Michmash; therefore said I, Now will the Philistines come down upon me to Gilgal, and I have not intreated the favour of the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered the
13. burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom
14. upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath appointed him to be prince over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.
15. And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people

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his forces, and that he had felt constrained to act. Samuel regards Saul's offense as so grave in the sight of God that it will lead to his overthrow. Yet it is difficult to see what Saul's wrong was. As our text stands the only thing we find is that Samuel had said that he would offer the sacrifices, an act which Saul took it upon himself to do. There is no discoverable wrong to justify Samuel's severe condemnation.

13. **Commandment of the Lord.** The only command Saul had violated was the offering of a sacrifice instead of waiting indefinitely for Samuel, and in this period sacrifices were offered by laymen without question. **Thy kingdom for ever.** The meaning is that Saul's dynasty would have been permanent, if he had been obedient.

14. **A man after his own heart** points naturally to David, Acts 13:20. If we could trust the Hebrew tenses, we might say that they show the passage to betray its origin after the time of David's rise to the throne.

15a. Samuel would go to Ramah, not to Saul's home at Gibeah. A section has been lost from the text, but is preserved in G. thus: *And Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal on his way; and the rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the men of war, and they went from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.*



- that were present with him, about six hundred men.
16. And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Geba of Benjamin: <sup>1</sup>
17. but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that
18. leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual: and another company turned the way to Beth-horon: and another company turned the way of the border that looketh down upon the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds *and wept*.

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Dispositions of the Hebrew and of the Philistine army, vs. 15b-18. 15b. **Numbered** or better *mustered*. Saul gathered together such forces as he could find and noted that there were about six hundred. It is thought by Smith that this number is taken from 14 : 2, and the sentence an editorial connecting link.

16. **Geba**, elsewhere *Gibeah*. The whole Israelite force is now concentrated at one place. Saul had at first held Michmash, but had abandoned it upon the approach of the Philistines, so that the two armies were now stationed on opposite sides of the pass.

17. **The spoilers** represents a part of the army sent out to plunder and to devastate. Three columns started out to ravage the land far and wide, to punish the people for their rebellion, a method common in modern as well as in ancient wars. **Ophrah** is reckoned as a Benjamite town, Jos. 18 : 23, and lay to the northwest. **Shual** occurs nowhere else, and is an unknown place.

18. **Beth-horon** lay to the west of Gibeah. **Zeboim** is named as a place in Benjamin, Neh. 11 : 34. It probably lay in a southerly direction, so that the three columns would proceed in all directions so as to ravage the whole country.

A specimen of Philistine oppression, vs. 19-23. The point is to indicate that the Hebrews at the critical moment were unarmed. But at the attack on the Ammonites at Jabesh-gilead Saul's forces were armed; in ch. 14 the Hebrews do not lack weapons; and there would be no point in gathering an army of 3,000, v. 2, unless they were armed. The story has no place here as it stands. We may suppose either that it refers to a small area near the Philistine border, or that it refers to some other period.

19. Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews  
 20. make them swords or spears: but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share,<sup>1</sup> and his coulter, and his axe, and his mat-  
 21. tock;<sup>2</sup> yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes; and  
 22. to set the goads. So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his  
 23. son was there found. And the garrison of the Philistines went out unto the pass of Michmash.

<sup>1</sup> G. *sickle*.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps *goad*.

19. **In all the land.** It would be extremely difficult to abolish smiths from the whole land. In rural communities almost any person can set up enough of a smithy to do such simple work as the sharpening of tools.

21. As this verse stands in English it means that the Hebrews had a tool for the temporary sharpening of their implements so that it would be necessary to make the long journey to Philistia but rarely. In the original, however, the verse is hopelessly unintelligible. The rendering *file* comes from Jewish sources and is clearly unjustifiable. The two words can scarcely be translated at all, **bluntness of edges** being the usual attempt. The words rendered *forks* is equally hopeless. G. renders *three shekels per tooth* suggesting the charges of the Philistine smiths. But nobody knows what the words mean. **To set the goads** is also perplexing, for the rendering is suspicious, since *setting* would not be done by a file, and the word cannot mean *sharpen*. G. has, *and the harvest was ready to reap*, which suggests either plundering or the difficulty of the peasants with dull tools, but has nothing to do with the context.

22. This statement is clear, though improbable. To disarm a people completely is nearly impossible in the days of firearms, and under conditions such that any one could construct an effective spear or a primitive sword, quite so.

23. This verse joins v. 18 to ch. 14, though it is so needless here that it has been regarded as a gloss. The point may be that while

14. Now it fell upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is
2. on yonder side. But he told not his father. And Saul abode in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron: and the people that
  3. were with him were about six hundred men; and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not
  4. that Jonathan was gone. And between the passes,

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three columns went out to ravage the land, the main force of the Philistines remained in contact with Saul's small army. G., however, has a very different text: *and he [Jonathan] went out from the garrison of the Philistines which was beyond Michmash, but he did not tell his father anything [of his plans]*. This prepares the way for ch. 14. Curiously this reading is generally overlooked.

Jonathan plans an attack on the Philistine garrison, 14 : 1-10.

1. **That bare his armour.** It was not really the task of this officer to carry the weapons of his chief. The armorbearer was a trusty aid, and was selected largely because of his military prowess. **Philistines' garrison** refers to the main force of the enemy, as distinct from the three raiding bands described above. **Told not.** The enterprize Jonathan proposes was very reckless, and Saul would certainly have forbidden it. Jonathan was a bolder spirit than his father.

2. **Uttermost part**, that is, on the outskirts of the town, probably as far as possible from the Philistines. **In Migron.** The only known Migron lies north of Michmash, and so is unsuitable. Wellhausen proposed *in the threshing floor*, and so an open high place, well adapted for Saul's camp. **Six hundred** indicates that the original three thousand of 13 : 2 had dwindled as the danger increased.

3. The significance of the presence of the priest appears later, v. 18. Abijah is not named outside of this chapter, but as Ahimelech (22 : 9, 20, 21 : 2) was also the son of **Ahitub**, and as the names have the same meaning, the two may be the same person. **Ephod** is certainly an instrument used by the priest in divination; as the priest apparently inserted his hand into the ephod, v. 19, it may have been some kind of a bag; cf. note on 2 : 18.

4 f. The exact configuration of the heights which Jonathan and his

by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side, and a rocky crag on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.

5. The one crag rose up <sup>1</sup> on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.
6. And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to
7. save by many or by few. And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee,
8. behold I am with thee according to thy heart. Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto the men,

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<sup>1</sup> G. omits.

helper must ascend is described, presumably to show the difficulty of his task. **The passes** or *ravines* are offshoots from the main valley. At the point of intersection were the two **rocky crags**, or *tooths of rock*. The names of these crags occur nowhere else. **Rose up** is a strained rendering of an unnecessary word. The crags were so situated that Jonathan would have to descend one to get into the valley and ascend the other to reach the Philistines.

6. **These uncircumcised** is here applied to the Philistines as a reproach, a usage quite common in this period, Judg. 14: 3, 15: 18, 1 Sam. 17: 26, 36. The term is rarely used of other nations. **The Lord will work for us**, otherwise failure would be certain from Jonathan's point of view. The task he proposed was foolhardy, as men would judge it, but with Jahveh's help anything was possible.

7. Jonathan had not commanded his assistant, the danger was too great for that, but laid his plan before him and invited his co-operation. Now the armourbearer agrees to share in the exploit, without whose aid even the bold prince would hardly dare to venture. By the help of G. we get a much clearer expression from the associate: *do all to which thy heart inclines; behold I am with thee; as thy heart so is my heart.*

8-10. Jonathan realized that nothing could come of this mad enterprize unless Jahveh were auspicious. He could not consult the

9. and we will discover ourselves unto them. If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them.
10. But if they say thus,<sup>1</sup> Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our
11. hand: and this shall be the sign unto us. And both of them discovered themselves<sup>2</sup> unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had
12. hid themselves. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of

<sup>1</sup> G. adds *unto us*.<sup>2</sup> G. *went out*.

oracle as Saul started to do a few hours later, so he resorts to a sign the sole object of which is to determine whether Jahveh approves of his act. (On the *sign cf.* further on 10 : 2-7.) The assumption is that only two remarks are possible for the Philistines, whereas they might have made many other remarks than the two named. But in substance the enemy could only invite the lonely pair to come up the hill, or to remain below. The words **tarry**, etc. (lit. *be silent*, i. e., *stand still*) would mean a challenge to the pair to remain until the Philistines could get at them. If they said **come up**, it would indicate either friendliness or disdain of their feebleness. The idea in Jonathan's mind is that if Jahveh is favorably inclined towards the bold enterprise he will put the appropriate words into the mouth of the Philistines.

Jonathan's assault on the garrison, vs. 11-15.

11. **The holes.** The remark of the Philistines shows their contempt for the Hebrews, and indicates abundant justification for their feelings. The Hebrews had evidently kept out of reach of the enemy.

12. **Answered.** Jonathan and his companion had not spoken, but the Hebrew uses *answer* freely, and the real meaning here is, *in view of the act of Jonathan, the men said*. **Shew you a thing**, or literally, *make you know a word*, i. e., *tell you something*. The words are not to be taken as a serious challenge, for two men would not be regarded as a

13. Israel. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew
14. them after him. And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were half a furrow's length

menace to a strong garrison, but as a taunt. The remark conveys deep significance to Jonathan, however, for it is the sign that Jahveh bids him attack. **The hand of Israel** not *into our hands*, for Jonathan evidently foresees the starting of a battle in which the army of Israel will participate.<sup>1</sup>

13. **Upon his hands and his feet**, because the cliff was steep. Smith supposes that during this climb Jonathan was hidden, so that he surprised the garrison. It is difficult to see how there could be any surprise to the Philistines, as they had seen Jonathan and asked him to come to them. If Jonathan had sought to reach them unawares, he would not have disclosed himself. It may be that the steep climb indicates that he reached the garrison at an unexpected point and so began his attack in an unexpected place. **And they fell before Jonathan**, is abrupt. It is better to follow G. *and they turned before Jonathan and he struck them down*. Either the Philistines were not looking for an attack, or he came upon some part of the camp unexpectedly. When he began his assault, the amazed enemy turned to flee, but the fleet assailant kept after them, merely pausing long enough to strike them to the ground, while his companion followed and slew those whom his leader had felled. The Philistines had felt very secure and probably had neither weapons nor armor at hand.

14. **First slaughter** in distinction from the havoc wrought in the battle which followed. Under the circumstances indicated in v. 13, the killing of twenty men in an outpost is not incredible. The rest of the verse is quite hopeless. The space of ground within which the Philistines were slain is not important. The English rendering is scarcely warranted. The translation *acre* is extremely doubtful; **length** does not occur at all; **furrow** is certainly a wrong rendering, to say nothing of its vagueness here, for the ordinary meaning would be *answer*. G. reads *with missiles and stones of the field*, indicating the weapons used, a reading accepted by Nowack; but such implements would not be employed for this kind of an attack.

<sup>1</sup>In vs. 6-12, 18-20, and in 2 Sam. Jonathan's name appears in the full form Jehonathan. The sections may be from a source different from the rest of the narrative.



15. in an acre of land. And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled: and the earth quaked; so there was an exceeding great
16. trembling. And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went *hither* and thither.
17. Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his
18. armourbearer were not there. And Saul said unto Ahijah, Bring hither the <sup>1</sup> ark of God. For <sup>2</sup> the ark of

<sup>1</sup> G. *Ephod*.<sup>2</sup> G. *For he carried the ephod that day before Israel*.

15. The **trembling** which fell upon the whole body of Philistines was apparently caused by Jonathan's attack, for which they were evidently not looking. The verse is redundant in defining the location of the trembling. The spoilers are distinguished from the garrison as those who had gone out on raids, 13 : 17 ff. **The earth quaked** has been explained as due to the panic among the Philistines, but it would be more reasonable to explain the stampede of the enemy as due to the earthquake. If the mysterious words in v. 14 meant that Jonathan climbed to a peak above the Philistines and rolled rocks upon them, the trembling and the earthquake would both be clear. **Great trembling**, lit. *for a trembling of God*, i. e., such a trembling as only God could send.

Saul leads his forces to battle, vs. 16-23.

16. **Looked** for the commotion attracted their attention. On the basis of G. a slight correction is required at the close of the verse, and we have: *the multitude dispersed in every direction*, i. e., fled without order or purpose.

17. Saul's directions indicate his belief that the Philistine panic was due to a battle with some Hebrews who had left his camp. As he had so few men this idea suggests an inconsistency with the description of v. 17. **Number** implies rather too formal an act for a small undisciplined force, such as calling the roll. The word may mean no more than *seek*. As Jonathan was a conspicuous person his absence would be quickly noted.

18. **Abijah**, see v. 3. **Ark of God**, for which G. reads correctly

- God was *there* at that time with the children of Israel.
19. And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the tumult that was in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest,
20. Withdraw thine hand. And Saul and all the people that were with him <sup>1</sup> were gathered together, and came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, *and there was* a very great discom-
21. fiture. Now the <sup>2</sup> Hebrews that were with the Phil-

<sup>1</sup> G. *went up*.<sup>2</sup> G. *slaves*.

*the ephod*. Saul wanted to ascertain the will of God before hazarding a battle, and, so far as we know, the ark was not used for divination. The ephod was a common agent in determining the will of God, 23 : 9, 30 : 7. Moreover, the ark was at Kiriath-jearim at this time, 7 : 1. This correction requires the emending of the next clause as well. In harmony with v. 3 G. means that a priest was with the army with the necessary means of divination.

19. **Talked unto the priest**, not referring to the order to bring the ephod, v. 18, but to the questions to which Saul wanted an answer, cf. 23 : 10 ff. **The tumult**. In v. 16 the same word is translated *multitude*. As the word means *roaring*, it is used of a *crowd* in a state of confusion, and so making much noise. The increase of the uproar indicated the spread of the panic among the Philistines. **Withdraw thine hand**. Saul realizes that he must be quick to take advantage of the confusion of the enemy, and so interrupts the priest and dispenses with the oracle. It appears that considerable time was required in obtaining an oracle by the ephod.

20. **Were gathered together**, or *called together*. The force with Saul was hastily assembled in military array in order to proceed to the scene of action. Upon reaching the battle field, the cause of the commotion mentioned in v. 19 is discovered, for the Philistines were found to be fighting among themselves. It is impossible to know the cause of this quarrel among the enemy, but it may have been over the responsibility for the blow inflicted by Jonathan.

21f. These verses are parenthetical, describing how Saul's troops were reinforced by two classes who joined him at a timely moment. The first class consisted of Hebrews who had been captured and enslaved and were taken on the campaign for menial work. Hence the interpolation in the English version **from the country** is misleading; and it is better to read with G. *revolted* in place of **round about**, for

istines as beforetime, which went up with them into the camp *from the country* round about; even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites that were with Saul  
 22. and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in the hill country of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they  
 23. also followed hard after them in the battle. So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed  
 24. over by Beth-aven. And the men of Israel were distressed that day: but Saul adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until it be evening, and I be avenged on mine enemies. So none  
 25. of the people tasted food. And all the people came

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the point is that they took advantage of the confusion of the Philistines and fled to the army of Saul. The second class comprised the Hebrews who had taken refuge in the hills (*cf.* 13:6), and now that the enemy was in a panic came from their hiding places and attacked them.

23. The writer looked upon the panic of the Philistines as the work of God, and so says Jahveh saved Israel. The foe was driven by the Hebrews as far as Beth-aven, or better after a text of G., Beth-horon, on the western slope of the hills of Ephraim. At this point G. has this substantial addition to the text which is quite generally accepted as authentic: *and all the people who were with Saul were about ten thousand men, and the battle spread in the mountains of Ephraim.*

Jonathan innocently violates Saul's adjuration, vs. 24-30.

24. **Distressed.** The right meaning is *hard pressed* by the enemy as 13:6, and that sense is unsuitable here. It is better to follow G. and change the whole clause to read: *and Saul committed a great blunder on that day*; for the narrative is evidently in sympathy with Jonathan. **Adjured.** Saul's idea was to continue the favorable auspices of Jahveh by a great fast. He probably did not consider the danger of the hungry people relaxing their efforts in the fight the moment they captured some spoil for food. **Evening,** for the Hebrew day ended at sunset, and then the fast would be over, and the fighting too.

25. **The people,** but the text reads *the land*, and in Hebrew that

into the forest; and there was honey upon the ground.

26. And when the people were come unto the forest, behold, the honey dropped: but no man put his hand  
 27. to his mouth; for the people feared the oath. But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes  
 28. were enlightened. Then answered one of the people,

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never means the inhabitants. G. reads, *all the land fasted*, which is open to the same objection, besides being redundant. The text is corrupt beyond the critic's power to restore. **Honey.** Canaan was called "a land flowing with milk and honey," Deut. 6 : 3, 11 : 9. The wild bees built in every sort of crevice, even in the carcass of a lion, Judg. 14 : 8. G. reads, *now there were honeycombs upon the field*, and is consistent in v. 26.

26. As the text stands the first part of the verse is a repetition; and then we have the statement that the honey was dropping, not already on the ground as in v. 25. Partly after G. it is better to read: *the people came to the honeycomb, whence the bees had gone* (after Smith). This sentence prepares the way for the assertion that the people did not touch the abundant food lying right at hand. **Put his hand to his mouth**, a figure of speech for *eat*, v. 27, Prov. 19 : 24. **Feared.** Among the Hebrews there was great awe of an oath, for the people believed that a curse would fall on them if they violated its terms.

27. **Heard not**, for Jonathan and his armorbearer were absent when Saul had enjoined the fast, v. 17, otherwise it is assumed that he would not have eaten the honey. **Eyes were enlightened** is explained by Smith as the reviving of the powers of vision, the weary man not seeing clearly; but it is better with Nowack to regard the description as the rekindling of the whole bodily strength as the result of the refreshment. Honey like sugar is rich in food that stimulates quickly.

28. The object of the speaker was not to warn Jonathan of his danger, otherwise he would have spoken before Jonathan got the honey to his mouth, but to explain the abstinence of the army. Jonathan would naturally fail to comprehend why others did not follow his example, and so secure much needed refreshment. **The people were faint** is regarded by many as a gloss from v. 31, or as

and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth food  
 29. this day. And the people were faint. Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened,  
 30. because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for now hath there been no great slaughter among the Philistines.

a corrupt text, Smith proposing some ingenious substitutes. Some phrase is necessary here, not as an independent statement, but as the conclusion of the speaker's remarks. We might read, *therefore the people are faint*, because Saul having ordered a fast, the people pass by the easily procured refreshment and are too weary to be effective fighters. If any change is made, it would be best to read something like, *and so the people fast*.

29. **Troubled.** The word is serious, and we may bring out the force better by rendering the clause, *my father has brought misfortune upon the land*, because his putting food under the ban has saved the Philistines from the full effect of their panic. **A little of this honey**, should be *this little honey*. Jonathan's sharp criticism of his father is based on the marked effect of a bit of honey on himself. Had the people eaten freely their exhaustion would be relieved, and they would be fit for the pursuit.

30. **The Spoil.** Jonathan's words imply that the pursuers had already found much food abandoned or thrown away by the enemy in their hasty flight. He would have had the people do more than merely take a little honey as he had. **No great slaughter.** The prince is evidently dissatisfied with the results. He had created a panic in the foe's ranks, and that afforded an opportunity to administer a crushing defeat which might have delivered his people from their oppressor. This failure rather than a desire for self-defense provoked the frank disapproval of his father's oath.

The famished people eat with the blood, vs. 31-35. 31. **Aijalon**, is near the border of the Philistine plain, and the statement therefore indicates that the enemy was driven out of the Hebrew territory. But such a rout is regarded as inconsistent with Jonathan's words in v. 30, and the text is deemed corrupt. Various emendations have been proposed, but they are unnecessary, for though the enemy was pursued to his own border, a large number had not been slain,

31. And they smote of the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint.
32. And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground:
33. and the people did eat them with the blood. Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have dealt treacherously: roll a great stone
34. unto me <sup>1</sup> this day. And Saul said, Disperse your-

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<sup>1</sup> G. *hither*, rightly.

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and so the Philistines' power was not really broken, and that is what Jonathan deploras. **Very faint.** An expression necessary here, for the exhaustion was due to the long pursuit and to the abstinence from food; therefore the words are not a reduplication of v. 28. The extreme hunger of the people explains the mad rush for food, and the clause is closely connected with v. 32.

32. Evening had come; the period of Saul's ban had passed; and the weary pursuers had evidently reached the main camp of the enemy, where they found cattle which the foe had abandoned on account of his hasty flight. In their hurry the famished Hebrews disregarded the law against eating with the blood, that is, they did not wait until the blood was properly drained from the slain animals. For the law, see Gen. 9 : 4, Lev. 17 : 13-14, Deut. 12 : 16. The blood was regarded as the life, which belonged to God, and the law required it to be returned to the ground.

33. **Ye have dealt treacherously** is inappropriate, addressed to Saul's informants. The simplest emendation is that proposed by Smith *to the informers*. A **great stone** would serve as an altar, and therefore involves the idea of sacrifice. The use of the stone would not in itself insure the complete shedding of the blood, but it would involve the offering of the blood to Jahveh.

34. **Disperse yourselves.** Saul addresses those who had informed him of the sin of the people, and thus the proposed change in v. 33 is justified. **Me** would imply that Saul was to act as priest. He did not fault the people because they were dispensing with the services of a priest, but because they were not offering the blood properly; therefore it is better with Klostermann to read *to Jahveh*. **Here.** literally, *with this*, refers to the great stone which served as an altar. **His ox.** *Sheep* of the preceding clause is lacking, therefore we should follow G. and read *every man what was in his hand*, i. e., what he had.



- selves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and
35. slew them there. And Saul built an altar <sup>1</sup> unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.
36. And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest,
37. Let us draw near hither unto God. And Saul asked

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds *there*.

**That night** is lacking in G. and is changed by several scholars to *to Jahveh*. The slaying, however, did take place at night.

35. **An altar.** Some writers regard the altar simply as the great stone referred to in v. 33; but a strict construction requires us to understand a new step, and I follow Budde in supposing that Saul laid up an altar in commemoration of his victory and of saving the people from sin. **First altar.** There is no record of any other altar erected by Saul, and therefore the words should be referred to the past, meaning that Saul had never before set up an altar.

Jonathan is condemned to death, vs. 36-45. 36. The famished people have been revived by a liberal meal, and Saul proposes a night attack upon the enemy. Note that he does not command, indicating a rather democratic organization. **Spoil them** or better, *plunder among them*, does not prepare for the idea of total extermination which Saul proposes, and we may read with Budde *smite them*. Saul was not after booty, but the destruction of the enemy. The people agree to follow Saul, but the priest, mindful of the interrupted oracle, v. 19, desires first to ascertain whether Jahveh favors the campaign. The priest was Ahijah, v. 3. Budde emends the text to make Saul ask for the oracle, but the change is unnecessary; under the circumstances the proposal would come well from the priest.

37. **Answered him not.** Saul's questions required only the answer *yes* or *no*, and it is difficult on account of our ignorance of the methods employed to understand how there could be no answer. By such a

- counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But
38. he answered him not that day. And Saul said, Draw nigh hither, all ye chiefs of the people: and know and
39. see wherein <sup>1</sup> this sin hath been this day. For, as the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But there was not a man among all the people that answered him.
40. Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto
41. thee. Therefore Saul said unto the LORD, the God of

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<sup>1</sup> Vulg. *in whom*

means as Gideon employed, the same result would have been reached if there had been dew both on the wool and on the ground (Judg. 6 : 36 ff.). In 28 : 6 we find another case in which Saul gets no answer, though he tries several kinds of divination. **That day** i. e., *at that time*.

38. **Chiefs**, lit. *corners*, in a figurative sense the supporting part of the people. **This sin**. Jahveh's failure to reply to Saul's queries indicates wrath, and the divine anger, according to the Jewish theology, presupposes sin, and therefore Saul sets about the discovery of the guilty person in order to secure again the divine favor.

39. **As Jahveh lives** is the most solemn form of an oath. **Saveth Israel** is a general expression indicating that God habitually saves the people. But it is particularly happy at this place, for Saul's point is that Israel cannot be delivered from the peril save by Jahveh. **Jonathan**. Saul is not subconsciously lighting upon the culprit. He means that there will be no exception to his decree of death to the offender even though it take the second most important life of the kingdom. **Not a man**. Many of the people who had been in the fight knew of Jonathan's offense, and doubtless they surmised that it was the cause of the divine silence; their refusal to make a charge against the heir apparent does them great credit.

40. The method of divination to be employed only admits of a choice between two parties. To make the members of the royal house one party emphasizes Saul's purpose to spare nobody. Doubtless he expected promptly to clear the court of blame.

41 f. Our text is obviously defective here, especially as we note that

- Israel, Shew the right. And Jonathan and Saul were  
 42. taken *by lot*: but the people escaped. And Saul said,  
 Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son. And  
 43. Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan,  
 Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told  
 him, and said, I did certainly taste a little honey with  
 the end of the rod that was in mine hand; and, lo, I  
 44. must die. And Saul said, God do so and more also:  
 45. for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.<sup>1</sup> And the people

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<sup>1</sup> G. better, *this day*.

shew the right is an impossible rendering, for the words mean, *give thummim*. The Greek text has preserved the original reading, particularly valuable because it is the only information we have to show how *urim* and *thummim* were used. The original text was: *And Saul said, O Jahveh, God of Israel, why didst thou not answer thy servant to-day? If the blame be in me or Jonathan my son, give urim; and if thou sayest, the blame is in the people, give thummim. And Saul and Jonathan were taken, and the people were released. Urim and thummim were two objects, thought to be colored stones, which were perhaps put in a bag, such as the ephod, and the one first drawn, here being urim, indicated that Saul or Jonathan was the culprit. A second casting, one of the stones standing for Saul, the other for his son, fixed the blame on Jonathan. In v. 42 the Greek text has another interesting addition, i. e., whoever Jahveh designates shall be put to death. And the people said to Saul, it shall not be according to this word. But Saul prevailed over the people, and they cast between him and Jonathan his son, and Jonathan was taken. This appears to be authentic. The people knew of Jonathan's guilt, and as the casting of the lots was evidently about to reveal his fault, a protest was lodged against Saul's going any further.*

43. **Tell me.** Saul was convinced by the result of the lots that Jonathan had committed an offense so serious as to arouse God's resentment, but up to this time he had no idea what the fault was. Jonathan speaks slightly of his act, for it was not wrong in itself, merely a violation of an indiscreet oath that he knew nothing about. He does not complain at the heavy sentence, but accepts his fate cheerfully as we note from a more accurate rendering of the last clause; *here I am: let me die*.

45. Saul had refused to alter his decree, v. 39, but the people who had assented before the lots were cast, v. 40, now rebel outright and

said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So

46. the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.
47. Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings<sup>1</sup> of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he

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<sup>1</sup> G. rightly *king*.

refuse to permit the death of the hero who had won the battle. Saul's power was not recognized as absolute. **Wrought with God** is vague, and hard to interpret; for if Jonathan worked with God, why should the sacred lot choose him as the victim of God's anger? The G. shows that the text is suspicious. Smith suggests *for God will be gracious this day*. It is simplest to change a single letter, *aleph* for *ayin* and we have *surely God has worked to-day*, i. e., in giving the great victory. **Rescued** not by force, but by a substitute which some scholars suppose to have been a man, others an animal as allowed even in the early laws, Ex. 13 : 13, 34-20.

46. Though Saul had made his peace with God, he did not attempt further to follow the enemy, and their defeat was so great that they retired to their own land.

A summary of Saul's wars, family and court, vs. 47-52. The passage was apparently written as the closing part of the story of Saul's life, and would naturally come later in the book. As it is entirely friendly to Saul, it may have been placed here to precede the account of Saul's later misfortunes. The passage seems to exaggerate Saul's victories.

47. The first clause must be rendered: *now Saul had seized the sovereignty over Israel*, i. e., by force. The phrase seems to be based on the story of the victory over Nahash, c. 11. After Edom the LXX has *Beth-rehob*; as *Rehob* and *Zobah* are Aramæan countries, the writer would make Saul's conquests almost as extensive as David's. **He vexed them** is inadmissible. The word means *he condemned as guilty*.

48. turned himself, he vexed *them*. And he did valiantly, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.
49. Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishvi, and Malchishua: and the names of his two daughters were these; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name
50. of the younger Michal: and the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host was Abner the son of Ner,
51. Saul's uncle. And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.
52. And there was sore war against the Philistines all the

As the sense is unsuitable, and the verb has no object, it is better to correct with the G.: *whenever he turned, he was victorious*, an emendation now generally accepted.

48. **Did valiantly** should be closely associated with v. 47. Otherwise we may render: *and he organized an army*. As the battle with the Amalekites is described in c. 15, it is clear that we have a summary of the whole reign of Saul.

49. **Ishvi** is evidently a corruption of *Ishbaal*, later changed to *Ishbosheth* on account of the revolt against the term *Baal*. He was Saul's successor, 2 Sam. 2 : 8 f. *Abinadab* who is named among the sons of Saul slain at Gilboa, 31 : 2, is lacking here. According to 1 Chron. 8 : 33, Saul had four sons, *Ishbaal* being the youngest, a fact which would explain his absence from the disastrous battle of Gilboa. Both daughters were used in Saul's attempts to ensnare David in the toils, according to ch. 18.

50. Neither Saul's wife nor his father-in-law are mentioned elsewhere. David had a wife named *Ahinoam*, but it can hardly be the same person. Rizpah, Saul's concubine, and her children are not included in the catalogue. Abner figures prominently in the history after Saul's death, but otherwise appears but incidentally.

51. This verse evidently intends to define the family relationship more closely. **Kish** was a son of *Abiel*, 9 : 1, therefore after Josephus we should read: *for Kish the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner were sons of Abiel*. As Abner means *Ner is my father*, he was evidently named appropriately.

52. The verse is partly connected with v. 46, but the closing part, showing how Saul gathered his army goes well with v. 48.

days of Saul: and when Saul saw any mighty man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

15. And Samuel said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king <sup>1</sup> over his people, <sup>1</sup> over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the
2. words <sup>2</sup> of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way, when he came
3. up out of Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy <sup>3</sup> all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

<sup>1</sup> Lacking in G.

<sup>2</sup> Lacking in G. properly.

<sup>3</sup> G. adds *them, and*.

(2) *Saul's war against Amalek, his disobedience and rejection*, ch. 15

It is assumed in the narrative that this war is Saul's first act as king, and that he is entirely under Samuel's orders. The marked hostility to Saul's rule adds to the reason for classing this passage with the stories in chs. 7; 8; 10: 17-25; 12. (See Introduction.) It is a parallel to 13: 7b-15a, neither account of Saul's rejection containing allusion to the other, or allowing for a second deposition. As the Philistines are assumed to have been completely defeated under Samuel (ch. 7), to find an enemy, Saul must go far away to the desert regions bordering on Egypt.

Saul is ordered to exterminate the Amalekites as an act of revenge, vs. 1-3. 1. **Sent me to anoint thee** goes back to the story in chs. 8, 10: 17-25, 12, of which this is the sequel.

2. **Marked**, correctly *visited* with punishment. Therefore we should render: *I will punish* or *avenge*. *Amalek* attacked Israel soon after the escape from Egypt; Ex. 17: 8-16; Num. 14: 45; Deut. 25: 19. The present war is in execution of the threat of Ex. 17: 16. It is implied that Israel does not engage in unprovoked war, and the wrongs of Israel justify the extermination of the offending tribe.

3. **Utterly destroy**. The word is usually translated *devote*. The term implies the setting apart from ordinary use, and so often as here to exterminate. **Infant**, better *child*, as the combination of *child* and *baby* indicates the slaughter of children of all ages.



4. And Saul summoned the people, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen,<sup>1</sup> and ten thousand men of Judah.<sup>1</sup> And Saul came to the city<sup>2</sup> of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites,<sup>3</sup> lest I destroy you with them:<sup>3</sup> for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And Saul smote the Amalekites, from Havilah as thou goest to Shur, that is before Egypt. And he took Agag the

<sup>1</sup> Lacking in G.<sup>2</sup> G. *cities*.<sup>3</sup> G. *do not join thyself with them*.

Saul gathers an army and defeats Amalek, but reserves the king and the best of the booty, vs. 4-9. 4. **Telaim**, in Josh. 15 : 24, Telem, one of the cities on the southern border of Egypt. This was probably the point of concentration, where the warriors were directed to assemble. The number of warriors is impossibly large, but late writers are inclined to predicate big things of the early days. The structure of the sentence in Heb. shows that the Judean force is a clumsy addition.

5. **Laid wait in the valley** or *wadi*, the low bed of a stream. Saul's purpose was to remain in hiding along one of the routes traversed by the Bedouin foe until he could fall upon them unexpectedly. His force could not have been large. And for the end in view it would not need to be large.

6. The **Kenites** were a friendly people according to Judg. 1 : 16, the stock into which Moses married, cf. Num. 10 : 29 f., Judg. 4 : 17. The notice to them and their departure is deemed inconsistent with Saul's plans of secrecy. That would be the case only if they were actually mingled with the quarry. The warning may have been a hint to take themselves and their cattle out of the neighborhood.

7. **Havilah** is mentioned as a place remote from Palestine, Gen. 2 : 11, 10 : 7, 29. Such a location would not serve here. Either the text is corrupt, or a place no longer known is meant. *Shur* was on the border of Egypt. The writer supposes the campaign to cover a large amount of territory.

8. **Agag alive**. The captive king, like the reserved booty, and the monument, was to mark Saul's triumph.

- king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed  
 9. all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag,<sup>1</sup> and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.
10. Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,  
 11. It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And Samuel was  
 12. wroth; and he cried unto the LORD all night. And Samuel rose early to meet Saul<sup>2</sup> in the morning; and it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and,

<sup>1</sup> G. adds *alive*.<sup>2</sup> G. *Israel*.

9. The people were associated with Saul in the act of disobedience; later he blames them for the error, vs. 20, 24. **Fatlings** involves an emendation of the text, but is accepted by many, though the word is very doubtful.

Samuel appears, upbraids the king, and pronounces his rejection from the throne, vs. 10-23. 11. **It repenteth me**. The idea is brought out that God's appointment was conditional, so that a king held office only during good behavior. **Wroth** does not seem to be the right idea, otherwise the all night appeal would be meaningless. G. reads *was disquieted*, certainly expressing a more appropriate feeling.

12. Samuel's all night pleas had produced a message, v. 16, and early in the morning he sets out to execute the divine decree. In G. the order of names is reversed, a fact unnoticed by the commentators: **It was told Saul had come to Carmel**, a place a few miles south of Hebron, in itself a more natural situation. **A monument** to commemorate his victory. G. makes Samuel the subject and has an additional clause: *and he turned his chariot and went down to Gilgal to Saul, and behold he was offering a sacrifice to Jahweh, the best of the booty which he had taken from Amalek*. According to this text Samuel comes upon Saul at a sacred place in the very act of making his guilty offering; cf. 13 : 10.

behold, he set him up a monument, and is gone about,  
 13. and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. And Samuel  
 came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be  
 thou of the LORD: I have performed the command-  
 14. ment of the LORD. And Samuel said, What meaneth  
 then this bleating <sup>1</sup> of the sheep in mine ears, and the  
 15. lowing <sup>1</sup> of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said,  
 They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the  
 people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to  
 sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have  
 16. utterly destroyed. Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay,  
 and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this  
 17. night. And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel

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<sup>1</sup> Heb. *voice or sound*.

13 f. **Blessed be thou.** Saul's words show that he was full of joy at his great victory, and is quite unaware of any transgression. The captured animals would naturally pour forth their cries. That Samuel makes no reference to any sacrifice counts against the Greek text cited above, but does not exclude it.

15. **The people spared.** In v. 9 we read that Saul and the people saved the best animals for sacrifice; here the king puts the whole responsibility on the troops. Fatlings and lambs as v. 9 are not mentioned here, adding to our suspicion of that verse. **Sheep** and **oxen** are comprehensive enough, *cf.* v. 21.

16. **This night,** *lit. the night.* The meaning can only be the past night here, v. 11, in spite of the fact that elsewhere the reference is always to the coming night. The words of the seer show what had come to him during his long intercession.

17. The text is difficult and the translation uncertain. The English versions are very questionable. The best rendering is: *Wast thou not too small in thy eyes to be head of the tribes of Israel? Yet Jahveh hath anointed thee king over Israel.* G. has an amplified text which may be more original: *Wast thou not too little in thy eyes to be a leader of the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe of Israel? Yet Jahveh, etc.* The idea is plainly to emphasize Jahveh's exaltation of Saul to a position beyond what he had any claim to, and so to establish an obligation of obedience.

said, Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And  
 18. the LORD anointed thee king over Israel; and the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners <sup>1</sup> the Amalekites, and fight against  
 19. them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the  
 20. sight of the LORD? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag <sup>2</sup> the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed  
 21. the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to  
 22. sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds *against me*.

<sup>2</sup> G. adds *alive* as v. 8.

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18. **Sinners** in view of their hostility to Israel. **They be consumed** is based on a necessarily emended text, as the Hebrew reads *until they have consumed them*. G. reads *until thou hast consumed them*.

19. **Fly**. The verb is a denominative from a noun meaning a *bird of prey*, hence *pounce eagerly*. The expression is more suitable in 14 : 32, its only other occurrence, for here the reproach was not for greedily devouring the booty, and for saving it alive.

20. G. reads, *because I listened to the demand [voice] of the people*. So Saul explains the saving of the animals as the work of his army, in agreement with vs. 9, 21, 24. Otherwise he insists that he has executed his orders.

22. Samuel expresses in beautiful language the common prophetic conception of God's demands upon the people, cf. Am. 5 : 21ff., Hos. 6 : 6, Is. 1 : 11 ff., Mic. 6 : 8 ff. The prophetic religion was ethical rather than ceremonial.

23. hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.<sup>1</sup>
24. And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their
25. voice. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD.
26. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over
27. Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds *over Israel*, as v. 26.

<sup>2</sup> G. *Saul*.

23. **Witchcraft** or *divination* was put down by Saul himself according to ch. 28. **Stubbornness** lit. *causing to push*, hence probably *presumption*, i. e., in taking upon himself the modifying of the prophet's order. **Teraphim** were images, sometimes in human form, and were considered harmless in David's time, 19 : 13, cf. Peters, *Relig. of the Hebrews*, 99 f.

Saul pleads for recognition before the people, vs. 24-31. By several scholars this paragraph is regarded as an addition. The chief reasons being that Samuel's attitude towards Saul relents, and the statement that God never repents. The slaughter of Agag would indicate that Samuel's feelings had not changed.

24. **I have sinned.** In view of the decree of deposition, the king at last awakes to his fault, but blames it upon his fear of the people. They were determined to save the valuable spoils, which doubtless they sadly needed, and Saul dare not risk his throne by thwarting them.

25. **Pardon my sin**, an act at the time regarded as quite within the power of a man of God, cf. Ex. 10 : 17, Mt. 9 : 2 ff. **Turn with me**, or better *return* as the same Hebrew word is rendered in v. 26. The meeting had taken place apart from the camp, and now that Saul has confessed and asked forgiveness, he desires the prophet to go back with him to the possibly interrupted sacrifice, so as to have Samuel's approbation before the people.

27. **Laid hold.** Saul may have intended to take Samuel back

- laid hold upon the skirt of his robe, and it rent.
28. And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.
29. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent:
30. for he is not a man, that he should repent. Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship
31. the LORD thy God. So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.
32. Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him

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by force, or the seizing of the robe may have been only to reinforce his supplication. That the robe was torn, indicates that the scene was violent.

28. The tearing of a robe was a highly symbolical act, 1 Kings 11 : 30 f; but the spoiling of his garment apparently angers the seer, for he goes further than before in declaring that his successor is already appointed, *cf.* 13 : 14. **Neighbour** or *companion* presupposes such a situation as we have later when David is an honored attaché of Saul's court.

29. **Strength**, or better with Driver, *the Glory of Israel*. Such terms for the deity are marks of a late period. **Repent**. The rejection of Saul had been based wholly on the declaration that Jahveh had repented, v. 11. The doctrine taught now is that a divine decree is unalterable.

30. Saul's request is now (*cf.* v. 25) that he may be privileged to keep up the appearances of the royal position. The **elders** were the leaders of the various clans which made up the army.

31. The relenting of Samuel is quite contrary to his usual attitude. Samuel slays Agag and returns to Ramah, vs. 32-34. The passage connects closely with v. 23. Immediately after the rebuke was the time for the complete execution of the decree of extermination.

32. **Delicately** is weak and inappropriate. *Totteringly* may be extracted from the rare Hebrew word, and that suits Agag's remark. Apparently he had been badly wounded and was now so weak and depressed over his calamity that death would be a relief.



- delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of  
 33. death is past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.
34. Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his  
 35. house to Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death; for Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

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33. **Hewed in pieces** is the traditional rendering of a word used only here, and the meaning of which is quite unknown. That Samuel slew Agag as a sacrifice is quite clear, but there is no need to suppose that unusual violence was used.

34. This parting shows an interview between Samuel and Saul of which we have no record.

35. This statement is contradicted in 19 : 24, but the latter passage is late and belongs to another source. **Samuel mourned** because Saul had failed either to show the qualities of a king or to do anything effective to relieve his people of their distress. For the same reason Jahveh repented his choice of a king. Such a statement would have no place if it originally followed 15 : 1-33.

Ch. 16 is all assigned to T, the early source. The real beginning of this story is 15 : 34 f., in which we have a reference to an interview between Samuel and Saul, of which there is no record in T, but for which we may have a late substitute in 13 : 7b-15a. It was the last interview between these two. Samuel had been greatly disappointed in the work of the man he had inspired to take the throne. Samuel had under God made Saul king to rescue Israel from the Philistines, but he had taken no action until his hand was forced by Jonathan, and even then his efforts were made abortive by his rash oath. The natural result is that Samuel mourned for Saul, that is lamented that his rule was so unpromising, and that Jahveh repented his choice of a king, a statement quite absurd after 13 : 7b-15a and 15 : 1-33.

In ch. 16 we find Jahveh resolved to put another king in Saul's place, and we find that Samuel is afraid of Saul. Evidently this is not the Samuel who had so mercilessly denounced the king to his face and declared that he was to be supplanted by one more worthy. Nor is this the Saul who had cringed and begged at Samuel's feet,

2. *The Second Stage: David is Attached to Saul's Court,*

16: 1-18 : 4

16. And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite:<sup>1</sup> for I have
2. provided me a king among his sons. And Samuel

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<sup>1</sup> G. to *Bethlehem*, in some texts preceding to *Jesse*.

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but the Saul who would have put Jonathan and David to death, and who did slay without scruple the priests of Nob.

In N the king is chosen by lot from all the tribes of Israel, in T he is chosen directly by Jahveh, and that is the method here. In T the chosen one is anointed by the seer, and then turned free to win his kingdom as he may, and that is precisely the method here.

We notice that Samuel does not say a word to the Bethlehemites or to Jesse or to David about the kingdom; nor is David told the purpose of his anointing. Anointing was very common, and the rite was applied to material things and to men, and men were anointed for many purposes. The result of the anointing of David was that Jahveh was with him from that day forward, and as a consequence he did many valiant deeds; but he may never have dreamt that he was to become a king. The heroic deeds in guerilla war performed by David under the influence of Jahveh's spirit explain the reputation that he soon attained, and which led to his choice as court musician to the psychopathic king.

It is usually assumed that David was a mere boy at the time of the anointing. As a matter of fact there is not a word in the passage to indicate his age. He was the youngest of Jesse's sons, but so far as that goes he might have been forty. He was of fair complexion and handsome, but those qualities do not imply boyhood. A reasonable guess is that he was in the early twenties. The most distinguished hero of the British Royal Flying Squadron was 23 years old. Therefore the same David serves in vs. 14-23 as the noted warrior.

(1) *David is anointed by Samuel*, 16: 1-12

1. Jahveh reproves the prophet for lamenting the loss of one rejected by him, since steps must be taken to put the divine decree into effect. **Horn**, commonly used as a vessel among a primitive people. Similarly Samuel had used a vial of oil for the anointing of Saul, 10 : 1.

2. **Will kill me.** Saul slew the priests of Nob for befriending

- said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say,
3. I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto
  4. thee. And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou
  5. peaceably? And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and

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David when he was a fugitive, 22 : 9 ff.; Samuel might well have hesitated to instigate a rebellion even against one rejected of God, for Saul still held the position as king. Samuel is told to allege an incidental mission in place of his real one. The prophet supposed all his plans to come from God. **Take an heifer** or *calf* suggests that the animal was led all the way from Ramah, but we cannot press the details of a story like this. Still the taking of the calf would serve to disarm the suspicion of any spies of Saul that might see him. Samuel is really afraid of Saul.

3. The prophets felt assured of constant divine guidance, Am. 7 : 15, Jer. 1 : 7 f. **Whom I name.** Samuel had been told in advance that the new king would be one of Jesse's sons; the disclosure of the individual was reserved till the moment for action came. In the anointing of Saul, there was no such reservation, 9 : 15 ff. In the manner of choosing the king, by direct designation, not by lot, this story is allied to the older version of the choosing of Saul.

4. **Trembling.** The fear of the elders suggests that Samuel's visits to various parts of the country did not always bring joy. The prophets were usually messengers of dark tidings. **Peaceably** is reminiscent of ambassadors who might bring a warlike message. It is better to render, *Is thy coming auspicious?*

5. **Come with me to the sacrifice.** If the elders were really presented at the sacrifice, as the words imply, then the anointing of David was not secret, an idea on which Smith lays much stress. G. makes the point plainer reading, *and rejoice with me today*, i. e., in view of what he was to do. **Sanctify.** The elders were left to perform the necessary rites of purification themselves, but it is said that Samuel himself made sure of the fitness of Jesse's family. The

6. his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him.
7. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for *the Lord seeth*<sup>1</sup> not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance,
8. but the LORD looketh on the heart. Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And
9. he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.<sup>2</sup> Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said,
10. Neither hath the LORD chosen this.<sup>2</sup> And Jesse made

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<sup>1</sup> The italicized words are rightly in G.

<sup>2</sup> Or, *this one*.

statement is difficult, for Samuel later did not know of the existence of David, and had apparently never seen the other sons till they appeared at the feast. Instead of *sanctified* we should probably read *sent for*. The elders were present, but the proceeding would be vain unless the presence of Jesse's sons was assured.

6. **Eliab** was in Saul's army, according to a late story, 17 : 28, and was large and impressive, v. 7, hence Samuel thought Jesse's oldest son was the choice of Jahveh, cf. 10 : 23.

7. **Countenance** is too limited. The word means *what may be seen*, hence *appearance*. Eliab was evidently a fine looking man. **Outward appearance** on the other hand is a generous rendering of a word that means *eyes*, though the lexicons go almost as far. *Countenance* would be better here, and the use would not be strained. **The heart** is applied to the seat of intelligence and of the secret motives which dominate one's life, hence it is the test in God's judgment.

8 f. **Abinadab** was the second in age and **Shammah** the third according to 17 : 13. The honor would naturally fall to the eldest, and then to the next in age successively. **Chosen** implies that Jahveh spoke to Samuel as in v. 7.

10. **Seven of his sons** is an inaccurate rendering to make the number agree with the facts, but the Hebrew means, *his seven sons*. The error is only apparent, for these were all the sons who were with their father at the feast. According to 17 : 12 Jesse had eight sons, but only four are known by name. In 1 Chr. 2 : 13-15 there are seven sons including David; three of them are not mentioned elsewhere,

seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel  
 11. said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. And  
 Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? <sup>1</sup>  
 And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and,  
 behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto  
 Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till  
 12. he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in.  
 Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful coun-  
 tenance, and goodly to look upon. And the LORD  
 13. said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Samuel  
 took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of  
 his brethren: and the spirit of the LORD came mightily  
 upon David from that day forward. So <sup>2</sup> Samuel  
 rose up, and went to Ramah.

<sup>1</sup> Better, *boys*<sup>2</sup> Better *then*.

and the implication of 17 : 12 f. is that Jesse had only the four sons actually named here.

11. **Sit down** implies a correction of the text, accepted by Driver and others. The Heb. word means *turn or walk around*. Perhaps Samuel means that they will not turn away from the task until he has seen Jesse's last son. There may be no thought of sitting at a table.

12. **Ruddy**, or *red*, so 17 : 42, otherwise only applied to Esau as a babe, Gen. 25 : 25. In 17 : 42 it marks a basis of contempt. It is uncertain whether it applies to the hair or the countenance. The description varies somewhat in 17 : 42. The text is scarcely sound, and we may correct with Smith and read: *a youth of fine eyes and goodly appearance*, though *eyes*, while literal, may be too specific. **Anoint**. We should either follow G: *anoint David*, thus giving point to the phrase **for this is he**; or, perhaps better, restore some lost words, thus: *anoint him, for this one I have chosen*, in contrast to those rejected before.

13. **His brethren**. The anointing was not secret, for the elders must have been present too, *cf.* on v. 5. **Spirit came** or *rushed* as the result of the anointing, *cf.* 10 : 6. **Forward** means that the spirit was with David permanently. Samuel does not say a word about the throne, but probably used a cryptic phrase as he had to Saul

14. Now the spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul,  
 15. and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. And  
 Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil  
 16. spirit from <sup>1</sup> God troubleth thee. Let our lord now  
 command thy servants, which are before thee, to  
 seek out a man who is a cunning player on the harp:  
 and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from <sup>1</sup>  
 God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand,<sup>2</sup>  
 17. and thou shalt be well. And Saul said unto his

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *of*.<sup>2</sup> G. *on his harp*.

(10 : 7) meaning to seize his chance. The chance came in the deeds by which he won the fame of v. 18, and in the slaughter of a noted Philistine, according to the original story of ch. 17.

(2) *David's first introduction to the court of Saul*, 16 : 14-23

A mental ailment had fallen upon the king, and at the suggestion of his servants he sent for David, already well known as a seasoned warrior as well as a skillful musician, that by his art he might allay the attacks which seized the king.

14. **Spirit of the Lord**, or *of Jahveh*, is carefully distinguished from *spirit from Jahveh* or *spirit of God* which has a baleful influence. The idea is that the good spirit is Jahveh's own spirit, while the evil spirit is sent from Jahveh, like Satan in the book of Job, or the lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets, 1 Kings 19 : 22 ff.<sup>1</sup>

Saul's disease appears to be melancholia with a homicidal tendency. Such afflictions were attributed to the presence of an evil spirit even in N. T. times. **Troubled**. The root idea seems to be *to come upon suddenly* and so *to terrify*. The indications are plain that the attacks were periodic and severe. The verb *troubled* has a frequentative force.

16. **Let our lord command**. The phrase is hardly grammatical in the original, and the rendering should probably be: *let our lord now say the word and thy servants before thee will seek*. The courtiers adroitly ask the king to order them to carry out their own recommendation. **Cunning** or *expert*; the phrase means literally *one who knows*. **Shall be well**, literally, *good will be to thee*, i. e., *it will do thee good*. The power of music to soothe mental suffering was evidently well known.

<sup>1</sup> On these spirits, see my *Good and Evil*.



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servants, Provide me now a man that can play well,  
 18. and bring him to me. Then answered one of the  
 young men, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of  
 Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in playing,  
 and a mighty man of valour, and a man of war, and  
 prudent in speech, and a comely person, and the  
 19. LORD is with him. Wherefore Saul sent messengers  
 unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which  
 20. is with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass *laden* with  
 bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them

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18. **Young men.** In spite of the change of terms, the speaker was one of the body of servants doing duty as courtiers. He was already personally acquainted with David. According to our text David's name is not given, an evident omission, as v. 19 shows that Saul knows which son is meant. David is apparently the most famous of Jesse's sons. A **man of war** is not redundant, as it implies that David was experienced in the art of war as well as valiant. The attainments of David go beyond the essential condition of skill in music; doubtless in view of 14 : 52, with which our passage is closely associated, his ability as a warrior would count much in his favor with Saul. **Prudent in speech** would suggest that David could be trusted about court; but the idea is rather *clever with words*, and the meaning seems to be that David was wise or entertaining. **Comely person**, rather *a man of figure*, i. e., a man of impressive form. **Jahveh is with him**, the result of the anointing, v. 13, and shown in the deeds of prowess which, it is assumed, David had already performed.

19. **Which is with the sheep** is easily recognized as a note by an editor inserted from a harmonistic motive. It would be more natural to find *who is an expert harpist*, as Saul would probably give Jesse a reason for desiring David's presence at court. Though David was mature and had achieved fame at arms, he is subject to his father's orders, in harmony with the conditions of Hebrew family life.

20. **Laden with bread.** The Hebrew has *an ass of bread*, *ass* being used as a measure like bottle. Such a usage is unknown and would indicate a disproportionate amount of bread, especially as Jesse was a small herdsman. Most scholars substitute *ten loaves* for *ass*, cf. 17 : 17. I prefer a reading suggested by G.: *Jesse took an ass and placed upon him bread and a skin of wine and one kid.* Such

21. by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; 22. and he became his armour-bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before 23. me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it

humble presents were evidently quite common. It was meant as a mark of appreciation for the honor conferred upon David.

21. **Stood before him**, not merely as a momentary act, for the words really mean that David took his place in Saul's household, cf. v. 22. **Loved him** is an evidence, of which there is much elsewhere, of David's winsome personality. **Armour-bearer** denotes an important office for it means the royal body-guard; it is clear that David was in close and constant attendance upon the king.

22. **Stand before me** clearly implies a permanent position, according to Hebrew usage. David might not be in attendance at court without his father's consent. The fact that he was approved by Saul was deemed a sufficient reason.

23. The verbs are all frequentative, the tense indicating habitual action. **Evil** is not necessary here, though of course the same spirit is meant; indeed many regard the word evil as a late insertion in vs. 14 ff. **Departed** implies the belief that the attack was caused by the presence of the spirit, hence the relief from the crisis coincided with the departure of the spirit. It is an interesting idea that though it was a divine spirit, it was under certain conditions subject to human control. We note that though David was brought as a musician, here and throughout the history his military activity stands first.

(3) *The story of David's victory over Goliath, 17 : 1-18 : 5, 17-19*

This account is usually regarded as unhistorical, for the narrative shows many traces of a late origin, and in an early source, 2 Sam. 21 : 19, it is recorded that one of David's heroes, Elhanan, "slew Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam."

In its present form the section is late and shows unmistakable traces of the national point of view. For Saul leads his army into Judean territory, Israel and Judah attack the fleeing enemy (v. 52), and Goliath's speech presupposes an equality in the positions of the two combatants.

The story is highly composite. It is quite clear that a single original narrative has been greatly amplified by combining duplicates, and by additions. The long passage, vs. 12-31, which is

came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

lacking in G<sup>B</sup>. belongs to another account of the story, and was the beginning of that narrative. David is here introduced because in that version his history begins here; vs. 19, 21, 23, repeat what is already told in vs. 1-11. The compiler has evidently modified v. 23b to avoid repetition and possibly contradiction, for Goliath's challenge may have been quite different in the two sources. There is a divergence too in that in v. 24 the Israelites flee when *the* Philistine advances; v. 31 is an awkward attempt to fit the section to vs. 32 ff.; 18 : 17-19 is the sequel to this story.

The passage 17 : 55-18 : 5 is likewise from another source, whether the same as vs. 12-31 or not is hard to say. Saul's inquiry about David is meaningless after their conversation in vs. 32 ff. The point of this piece is to make David an attaché of the court, and to report the bond between Jonathan and David.

When we relegate these three sections, 17 : 12-31, 17 : 55-18 : 5, 18 : 17-19, to a parallel and later version, we still have an account which betrays much amplification. In the first place the original story did not contain the name of the enemy slain by David. Except in v. 4 and the duplicate v. 23 this foe is invariably called *the Philistine*, and that is what he calls himself, v. 8. The proper designation of this giant is **Goliath the Gittite**, 2 Sam. 21 : 19. In v. 23 it is plain that **Goliath** is a gloss, for the proper designation *the Philistine* stands between *Goliath* and *his name*; vs. 46, 47 is an amplification of the account of Goliath found in 2 Sam. 21 : 19, and a substitute for a simple description of *the Philistine* of the original story. The name of Goliath is a gloss also in 21 : 9 preceding the proper term *the Philistine*. David had made a name for himself by slaying a Philistine. Goliath was a famous Gittite warrior, and to exalt David's fame the identification was made.

Another considerable amplification is in vs. 41-47; v. 48 follows directly upon v. 40. David's speech is filled with late ideas, and is feeble in that he merely repeats the threat of his opponent. There are numerous other glosses, which have been added from time to time as the story developed. It is possible now to unearth approximately the original story.

Saul once more led his forces against the oppressors of his people. A Philistine warrior offered a challenge to single combat, creating a panic in Saul's hosts. David was Saul's armor-bearer, and the spirit of Jahveh came upon him, and he volunteered to meet the one

17. Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and they were gathered together at Socoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between

who defied Israel. He rejected the usual equipment of the soldier, because he saw that with sword and spear he was no match for the Philistine. He reverted to the weapons he had used in his boyhood, and which he had never wholly abandoned. He plays around his opponent, avoiding his long and heavy spear, until he sees an opening, and then drops him to earth with a well-aimed stone from his sling. Quickly rushing forward, he takes the Philistine's sword and cuts off his head, and retains the sword for use upon the rest of the host. The Philistines flee, the Israelites pursue and a great victory is won, David using the sword to good effect.

The above is precisely the necessary setting for the song of the women in 18 : 7. Saul had distinguished himself, but David's glory was much greater.

It should be added that there is nothing whatever in the narrative, even in its latest form, which proves that David was a mere boy, though Cheyne argues that he could not have been over 14 (*Aids to the Devout Study of Criticism*, p. 100). Even in the late section, 17 : 12-31, Jesse is an old man, and his youngest son is not necessarily a kid. Saul says David is a youth, vs. 33, 55 f.; so he was, relative to the seasoned warrior he proposed to attack. The Hebrew term for *youth* is a very flexible word, indeed it is in English, for it is always relative; one's youth may cover the twenties as well as the teens. The Philistine disdained David, and the account of him is similar to that in 16 : 1-13; but again David may have been much smaller and younger than his opponent, and still not be a young boy.

In the later story which contains the first account of the hero, David happens to be at the front when a single Philistine drives back the hosts of Israel, and learning of the great reward offered by the king, slays the foe and is brought before Saul with the head in his hand. Saul keeps him at court, and proposes to give him his daughter Merab as promised, but when the time comes, she is given to another.

The challenge to single combat, vs. 1-11. 1. In very modern terms we would say: *the Philistines mobilized their forces for war, and they were concentrated at Socoh . . . and they made their camp.* Socoh lies between Bethlehem and Gath, on the Judean border. This strange combat is located nearly midway between the homes of the two participants. Azekah is named after Socoh in Josh. 15 : 35, and must have been near. Ephes-dammim does not occur elsewhere, though there is a Pas-dammim mentioned in 1 Chron. 11 : 13 as the

2. Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched in the vale of Elah, and set the battle in array
3. against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side: and there was a valley
4. between them. And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of
5. Gath, whose height was six <sup>1</sup> cubits and a span. And he had an helmet of brass <sup>2</sup> upon his head, and he was clad with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat
6. was five thousand shekels of brass.<sup>2</sup> And he had greaves of brass <sup>2</sup> upon his legs, and a javelin of brass <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. four.<sup>2</sup> Bronze.

scene of one of David's battles with the Philistines. As the name means *ceasing of blood* it may have come from this event, as the Philistines' purpose was to end the war by a single combat. Lagarde suggested *on the edge of the waters* (see Smith), but there is little water in the region.

2. **Vale of Elah** or *valley of the terebinth*, was so named from the prevalence of this tree. As it extends from Gath into the hills of Judah, it marks the course of the Philistine march.

3. **Mountain**, better *hill*, for the armies were in the low country. This disposition of the forces prepares the way for the combat which takes place in the sight of both armies. *Valley* or *ravine* as Cheyne suggests.

4. **Champion**, lit. *man of the two intervals*, thought to refer to the repeated standing of the warrior in the space between the two armies. The text may be wrong, for G. offers a striking variant: *there came forth the mightiest of all the people of the Philistine army*. **Goliath** is a feminine, but Semitic usage justifies the form. The name is a gloss, see above. **Six cubits** would be about ten feet.

5. Driver points out that the armor for defense was all of bronze, while the weapons of attack were of iron. **Coat of mail** is properly armor for the breast made in scales like those of a fish. **Five thousand shekels** would be about one hundred and fifty pounds. The picture of the giant is at all events consistent.

6. **Javelin** or *dart* as a part of the defensive armor seems inappro-

7. between his shoulders. And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and his shield-bearer
8. went before him. And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you,
9. and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall
10. ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a
11. man, that we may fight together. And when Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

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priate, and such a weapon would not be carried *between the shoulders*. G. has *shield* which gives better sense.

7. **Staff.** The Hebrew reads *arrow*, but in 2 Sam. 21 : 19 where this weapon is described, we have *shaft* and should so read here. The **shield-bearer** apparently only accompanied the giant on parade, for he does not appear to be present at the combat; but see v. 41.

8. **Set your battle in array** or *provoke a battle*. The Philistine is about to propose a plan to make the battle unnecessary, and at the same time to insure victory for his side, for his confidence in his prowess was great. **Come down**, since Saul's army was on a hill. The combat was to take place in the ravine between the armies.

9. **And serve us.** The giant makes the terms more emphatic in case, as he surely expected, he be the victor. **Serve** means be subject to. The implication is that the two peoples are at the time on an equal footing.

10 f. **Defy.** By this taunt the Philistine hoped to force an Israelite for very shame to accept his challenge. **Fight together.** G. is very specific: *both fight in single combat*. **Dismayed.** It is assumed that Saul could not honorably refuse the challenge. When David later took up the challenge, the giant's terms were ignored, as a general battle followed.

David's arrival at the camp of Israel, vs. 12-31. This section is



12. Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man was an old man in the days of Saul,
13. stricken *in years* among men. And the three eldest sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle<sup>1</sup> were Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab,
14. and the third Shammah. And David was the youngest:
15. and the three eldest followed Saul. Now David went to and fro from Saul to feed his father's sheep at
16. Beth-lehem. And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.
17. And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and carry *them* quickly to the camp to thy
18. brethren; and bring these ten cheeses unto the captain

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<sup>1</sup> Or *war*.

lacking in the Codex Vaticanus, the best Greek text. It belongs to another account of David; see above.

12. The particularity of David's introduction, unnecessary after c. 16, betrays an independent section. **Eight sons**, cf. on 16 : 10. The last clause is difficult, lit. it says *he went among men*. After Driver we may read: *now the man in the days of Saul was aged among men*, giving the reason why he was not at the front.

15. The verse is evidently introduced by an editor to harmonize this passage with 16 : 14-23, but the result is not very satisfactory.

16. The author reports that for forty days the giant comes out twice each day to repeat his challenge, the two armies meanwhile remaining on their respective hills.

17. **Ephah** is a dry measure containing a bushel and a third. **Parched corn** is corn in the ear roasted over a fire, and a common article of food among the primitive Orientals. **These ten loaves** should be ten loaves of this bread. The loaves were usually flat. The passage suggests that these armies were largely provisioned by stores of food sent from home.

18. **Cheeses**, lit. cuts of milk. **Thousand** is equivalent roughly to

of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and  
 19. take their pledge. Now Saul, and they, and all the  
 men of Israel, were in the vale of Elah, fighting with  
 20. the Philistines. And David rose up early in the  
 morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took,  
 and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came  
 to the place of the wagons, as the host which was  
 21. going forth to the fight shouted for the battle. And  
 Israel and the Philistines put the battle in array, army  
 22. against army. And David left his baggage in the  
 hand of the keeper of the baggage, and ran to the  
 23. army, and came and saluted his brethren. And as he

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our regiment. **Fare.** David was enjoined to greet his brothers and to learn their condition, whether well or ill, whole or hurt. **Pledge** is not clear. It probably means that David was to bring back some token from his brethren.

19. **They** naturally refers to the three sons at the front; therefore the verse is best interpreted as a part of Jesse's directions to David, here informing him where to go. Or it may show how poorly this section is related to its context, *cf.* v. 2.

20. **Morning** following the day on which he had received his instructions. **Keeper** would not be applied to a brother; if there were four still at home one of them would naturally care for the sheep, *cf.* v. 28. **Took** or *took up*, the load of provisions he was to carry to the camp. Cheyne reads *and loaded (the ass)*. **Place of the wagons** is doubtful. Saul could hardly have had wagons in the hills, and *entrenchment* after *BDB* is better. **To the fight** suggests a condition in which there was actual fighting, not merely an armistice while Goliath uttered his semi-daily challenge.

22. **Baggage** has rather a modern sound. The word means vessels, i. e., those in which David had carried the provisions. **The keeper of the baggage** was apparently the head of the commissary department, though Smith suggests the guard of the equipage.

23 f. **Same words** refers to the challenge in v. 8 ff. If this were the same source, there would be less detail in the account of the Philistine. In G. the order of the last clause is more natural: *were sore afraid and fled*. They ran back from the battle line to the entrenchment.

talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spake according to  
 24. the same words: and David heard them. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him,  
 25. and were sore afraid. And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his  
 26. father's house free in Israel. And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to <sup>1</sup> the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies  
 27. of the living God? And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the  
 28. man that killeth him. And Eliab his eldest brother

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<sup>1</sup> Better *for*.

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25. **Come up** expresses a different idea from v. 8, according to which each army was on a hill. Men were deputed to publish a proclamation announcing the great reward for the conquest of the giant. **Free**, i. e., from taxes, military service and all other obligations to the state.

26. David's first question implies that he had not heard distinctly the words of the herald. This second question indicates his readiness to undertake the task which all the men in the army shunned. **The living God** suggests a later source.

27. **After this manner** means that some person repeated the terms of the reward. **Saying**, or better, *adding*.

28. Eliab's anger was due to the effrontery of the youth in discussing with the warriors the affairs of the war. Possibly he felt the sting in David's second question. **Left** or *entrusted*. The question implies that Eliab knew of no one to take care of the small flock, which indicates Jesse's poverty. **Pride** or *presumptuousness*. The real charge

heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why art thou come down? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down  
 29. that thou mightest see the battle. And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause? And  
 30. he turned away from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him  
 31. again after the former manner. And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them  
 32. before Saul; and he sent for him. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy

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is curiosity, which had led the boy to forsake his work in order to see a fight.

29. The first question is an assertion of innocence; the second is difficult, but the English version is hardly possible, and is too vague. The phrase is: *was it not a word?* This is understood to mean that the accused asserts that he had done nothing but ask a question. Smith suggests: "is it not a matter of importance," but this strains the text to the utmost. Moreover, David's first question indicates a minimizing of the whole affair so far as Eliab was concerned.

30. **From him**, i. e., from his brother. **After the same manner** indicates that David repeated the two questions of v. 26, and as the former answer was repeated David heard Saul's offer three times. He appears to be much concerned about the character of the reward, to which there is no reference in the earlier account of the combat.

31. This verse is an editor's attempt to fit the preceding section into the narrative into which it is incorporated. The close is very awkward; **sent for him** strains the text, but G. goes much further in the interest of harmony, reading: *and they took him and brought him before Saul.*

The combat between David and Goliath, vs. 32-54. The story of v. 11 is here resumed.

32. **No man's**. G. with better force reads *let not the heart of my lord fail*. The faint-heartedness carries us back to v. 11, where Saul is included in those seized with panic.

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33. servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but
34. a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and
35. took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard,
36. and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant smote both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath
37. defied the armies of the living God. And David said,
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33. Saul lays no stress on the gigantic stature and superior equipment of the Philistine, but only on his great maturity and his large experience in war.

34 f. David does not claim ever to have fought with a man, and so the picture is consistent in this respect with vs. 12-31; he bases his confidence on his experience as a shepherd in which he had slain the wild animals that preyed upon the flock. David's speech bears marks of later amplification. The verbs are usually interpreted as frequentatives, but we should suppose that such experiences would not be common; and v. 36 implies the slaughter of one lion and one bear. **Beard** would hardly give a good hold for offense. The word means *chin*, or here *the lower jaw*. This method of killing would be more suitable for David the mature warrior than for David the ruddy youth.

37. **Out of the paw** implies that the lion and bear had already seized David; therefore it is better to render more literally, *from the paw*. **Will deliver me**. David's last words constitute his final point in the answer to Saul's objections to his youth. His first point is that he has shown his courage and skill in the killing of a lion and a bear; the second is that Jahveh will protect him in all dangers, all the more since the giant in taunting Jahveh's armies taunted Jahveh himself with impotence. David was ever deeply religious. **Shall be**. Saul's words are not the usual pious wish, but a strong assertion based on David's revelation of his character and of his faith.

- The LORD that delivered me out of the paw<sup>1</sup> of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD shall be with thee.
38. And Saul clad David with his apparel, and he put an helmet of brass<sup>2</sup> upon his head, and he clad him with
39. a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his apparel, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David
40. put them off him. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he
41. drew near to the Philistine. And the Philistine came

<sup>1</sup> G. *mouth*.<sup>2</sup> *Bronze*.

38. **Apparel.** The word usually refers to the outer garment; but such a sense would be unsuitable here, for there would be no point in dressing David in Saul's robes. In 18:4 the word means *outfit*, of a military character, and the same idea is intended here. The last sentence is rightly lacking in G. as it is redundant after *outfit*.

39. **His sword.** David had no sword, and it is better to read *and he [Saul] girded David with his sword*. **Assayed to go** makes no sense in connection with the following clause. Most modern scholars follow G. and read *he labored in vain to walk*; but a youth able to seize a lion by the jaw and slay him would not stagger under Saul's armor. We may render the same substituted word: *he was impatient to be off*, i. e., to the combat, and testing a strange outfit would cause delay.

40. **Staff** is not the shepherd's crook, but the stick carried by walkers. David took it as a possibly offensive weapon. **Shepherd's bag** may be a gloss inaccurately defining *scrip* or *pouch*, which seems to be a technical name for the bag in which the slinger carried his missiles; or we may read with G., *shepherd's bag which served as a pouch*. **And his sling was in his hand**, is obviously faulty; render: *and with his sling in his hand, he advanced towards the Philistine*.

41. G. lacks this verse, and it is at least superfluous, needlessly



- on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare  
 42. the shield went before him. And when the Philistine  
 looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for  
 he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair  
 43. countenance. And the Philistine said unto David,  
 Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And  
 44. the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the  
 Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give  
 thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of  
 45. the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou  
 comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with  
 a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD  
 of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which thou  
 46. hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into  
 mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head  
 from off thee; and I will give <sup>1</sup> the carcasses of the host

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds *thy carcass and*.

anticipating v. 48; moreover the shield-bearer could hardly have been present at the actual combat. The whole section 41-47 is suspicious: see above. The giant felt affronted because he was met by a youth with a staff instead of one of the mightiest of Saul's warriors.

43. **Staves** is a textual error, for David carried but a single club, v. 40. **By his gods.** Swearing by a god added solemnity to the oath. The cursing was not a mere indulgence in profanity, but the free use of imprecations.

44. This verse is regarded as a duplicate of v. 43 which seems to afford sufficient for the Philistine to say. David's threat in v. 47 is weak as a mere repetition of his antagonist's.

45. **Sword** was not mentioned in the description of Goliath's outfit, vs. 4-7, probably because it was not of abnormal size. **Javelin** here appears to be an offensive weapon, cf. v. 6. **In the name.** David feels divinely commissioned to remove the stigma placed upon Israel and so upon God.

46. David's threat includes not only the champion, but the whole Philistine army. There is no indication that he felt bound to a single combat on Goliath's terms, v. 9. **A God in Israel** is not accu-

of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth  
 47. may know that there is a God in Israel: and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's,  
 48. and he will give you into our hand. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran  
 49. toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his  
 50. face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in  
 51. the hand of David. Then David ran, and stood over

rate, though some emend the text to get this faulty rendering; we should translate: *that Israel has a God.*

47. **This assembly** apparently means Israel as contrasted with *all the earth*, v. 46, i. e., all other nations. The word used for *assembly* is of late origin.

48. The story is resumed from v. 40. **Arose** does not imply that Goliath had been sitting. The Hebrew uses the word to mark the beginning of an action without reference to posture. **Toward the army** is difficult, for evidently the army of Israel is meant. With Budde it is better to read *from the army*.

49. David's actions are described minutely at the point of supreme interest. **Forehead**. G. amplifies thus: *the stone passed through the helmet into his forehead*. The big bronze helmet afforded no protection against the terrific blow from the stone.

50. G. lacks this verse also. It looks like a prosaic elaboration, and besides is not quite correct, for the slaying comes later. After v. 39 it would be needless to say that David had no sword.

51. The Philistine was not necessarily killed by the impact of the stone. David hastened to complete his victory before interference from other Philistines was possible. Evidently there was no armor-bearer at hand. **Fled**. Panic seized the host when they saw a Hebrew

the Philistine, and took his sword,<sup>1</sup> and drew it out of the sheath thereof,<sup>1</sup> and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw that  
 52. their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou comest to Gai, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath,  
 53. and unto Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled  
 54. their camp. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.

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<sup>1</sup> Lacking in G<sup>B</sup>.

youth with a sling vanquish their famous warrior. They did not offer to become the subjects of Israel as they were bound by the Philistine's agreement.

52 f. **Pursued.** As the Philistines had broken the compact for a single combat, the Hebrews were free to damage their foe as much as possible. **Gai** means *valley* and is not a proper name; with G. we should read *Gath*, an important city of the Philistines like **Ekron**. **Shaaraim**, according to Josh. 15 : 36, is a place near Socoh. But we should read: *the wounded fell along the road from Shaaraim to Gath and to Ekron* (so Smith). The whole course of the pursuit was marked by wounded Philistines. The Hebrews evidently assailed the enemy vigorously, an inference supported by **chasing**, v. 53, which really should be *hotly pursuing*. **Spoiled.** The Philistines had established a permanent camp, and had fled so suddenly that rich booty was left behind, which plunder the Hebrews promptly appropriated. Ancient wars, and perhaps many modern ones, were waged chiefly for plunder.

54. As Jerusalem was still held by a foreign people, the anachronism is evident. **In his tent** suggests a relation to 16 : 14-23 according to which David would be with the army, and an important figure there. The sword of the Philistine was later reported to be at the temple in Nob, 21 : 10; we do not hear of the other armor again.

55. And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As
56. thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is. And as
57. David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with
58. the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.
18. And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him
2. as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

David is attached to Saul's court, 17 : 55-18 : 5. This section is lacking in G. and belongs to the same strand as chs. 12-31.

55 f. The story reverts now to the point of David's advance to meet the Philistine, v. 48. **Whose son now is the boy?** is the correct rendering. In harmony with this narrative, but contrary to 16 : 14-23, Saul, and for that matter Abner too, do not know who David is. **I cannot tell.** A literal rendering, **I do not know,** is better. **Stripling** or **youth.** The word means a young man just attaining marriageable age.

18 : 1. **End of speaking.** So far as our text goes the conversation consisted merely of a brief question and a terse reply. It would be more natural to join together 17 : 58 and 18 : 2, 5, connecting the whole of Saul's dealings with David, after which the story of Jonathan's love would fit in well. It is better to render: *the life of Jonathan was bound up with the life of David.* The friendship established here was faithfully kept by both parties. After Jonathan's death David pays a fine tribute to his friend, 2 Sam. 1 : 19-27.

2. Corresponding to 16 : 22, David is permanently attached to the king's court, the fuller details of his duties being told in v. 5.

3. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because
4. he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his
5. bow, and to his girdle.

3. *The Third Stage: Vain Efforts to Destroy David*, 18 : 5-28 : 2

And David went out <sup>1</sup> whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: <sup>1</sup> and Saul set him over the men of war, and it was good in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

6. And it came to pass as they came, when David re-

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<sup>1</sup> Or, *in whatever Saul sent him he succeeded.*

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3. This verse should follow directly on v. 1. The **covenant** was an agreement, the terms of which we do not know, but the inference from v. 1, and later passages, is that the two made their interests common. The reading, however, should be, *Jonathan made a covenant with David.*

4. Jonathan bestows the highest honor on David by putting on him the complete outfit of a prince, including his military accoutrements. David had been made a member of the court; and doubtless had been poorly enough clothed.

5. This verse is an editorial gloss to pave the way for vs. 6 f. David's position is greater than in 16 : 23. At first he was in charge of small expeditions, and later on account of his unfailing success, Saul made him the head of the army, thus replacing Abner, 17 : 55. The exaltation of David was approved by the people at large and by the men of war who found him an effective leader.

(1) *Saul's attempts to kill David frustrated, and result in David's flight*, 18 : 6-21 : 15

18 : 6-30. Of the various stories recorded here, vs. 18 : 6-21; 15 : 10-12 have a parallel in 19 : 9 f. The section is lacking in G. (except v. 12a, and must be looked upon as a duplicate, as the incident is out of place here. Similarly vs. 17-19 (also lacking in G.) are parallel to vs. 20-27. The incident is to be connected with the secondary source in ch. 17 in which the king's daughter was promised to the one who

turned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul,<sup>1</sup> with timbrels, with joy, 7. and with instruments of music. And the women sang one to another in their play, and said,

8.                   Saul hath slain his thousands,  
                      And David his ten thousands.

And Saul was very wroth, and this saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?

9. And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.  
10. And it came to pass on the morrow, that an evil

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<sup>1</sup> G. *David*.

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slew the Philistine. There are certain modifications by the editor in his unsuccessful attempt to make the section fit into its present place. There are various other duplicates which add to the evidence of double sources.

Saul's jealousy is aroused, vs. 6-9. 6. **As they came** must be omitted as a harmonistic note, and with G. we should read *David* instead of *king Saul*. The song was sung to praise David's great feat, cf. Judg. 11 : 34.

7. **One to another**, i. e., antiphonally. **In their play** conveys the idea of making sport or entertaining. The rendering of the song is very doubtful. The Heb. runs literally *Saul has slain with his thousand, and David with his myriad*. The meaning is not clear, but it is certain that David is honored above Saul.

8 f. Saul's malady made him morbidly suspicious, and he seizes upon the words praising David more than himself, and he interprets them to his own discredit. The last clause is not a question, but an assertion: *there is yet for him only the crown*. This is lacking in G., probably rightly as it anticipates too much. **Eyed** occurs only here, and is doubtful, but the idea is that Saul kept his eye on David, i. e., watched him suspiciously. In v. 29, we find *was enemy*.

The threat with the spear vs. 10-12.

10 f. G. lacks this passage, which is a parallel to 19 : 9 f., where Sauls attempt on David's life fits in better, after his cunning at-



spirit from <sup>1</sup> God came mightily upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as he did day by day: and Saul  
 11. had his spear in his hand. And Saul cast the spear; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall. And  
 12. David avoided out of his presence twice. And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him,  
 13. and was departed from Saul. Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the  
 14. people. And David behaved himself wisely in all his

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<sup>1</sup> Or of.

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tempts to bring about his destruction had failed. **Prophesied** in 19 : 9 *sitting*. The prophetic frenzy was regarded as a sign of madness. Here it is wrongly attributed to the presence of an evil spirit. **Cast**. As Saul apparently did not hurl the spear as he did in 19 : 10, it is better to emend with G.: *Saul raised the spear*. After this preliminary act the expression of his intentions is in its natural place. After throwing the spear, it would be late to say what he intended to do. **Avoided**, i. e., *turned about or dodged*. **Out of his presence** implies leaving the room; the idea is *out of his way*, so as to avoid the spear. **Twice** indicates that Saul made two unsuccessful attempts to get David in range of the lance.

12. **Afraid**. If we follow G. the cause of Saul's fear was David's popularity as shown in the song of the women. The reason given here is lacking in G. **Departed**, cf. 16 : 14.

*David is reduced in position*, 13-16. 13. **Removed him from with him** is a literal rendering necessary to bring out the true force. Up to this time David was Saul's armor-bearer, 16 : 21, and so closely attached to his person. The king degrades him from this high office and gave him a subordinate command, where supposedly he would have no chance to distinguish himself. **Before the people**, as the clause manifestly explains what David did as commander of a regiment, we might render *at the head of the troops* (similarly Smith).

14 f. **Ways** is rather specific; better, *duties* as leader of a body of soldiers. **Stood in awe** is meant to be stronger than *afraid*, v. 12. Saul's terror was growing as David achieved one success after another.

15. ways; and the LORD was with him. And when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he stood in  
 16. awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David; for he went out and came in before them.
17. And Saul said to David, Behold, my elder daughter Merab; her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the  
 18. hand of the Philistines be upon him. And David said unto Saul, Who am I, and what is my life, *or* my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to  
 19. the king? But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to

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16. David's popularity was increased by the means Saul took probably in the hope that he would fall in battle. This new command evidently brought him in the public eye more than the old one.

Saul breaks his promise to give Merab to David, vs. 17-19. This section is also lacking in G. to the great improvement of the narrative. It is the sequel to 17:12-31. If David had once become eligible to marry in the king's family he would not have raised the obstacles as he does, v. 23. Michal would have been called Saul's youngest daughter in contrast to Merab the eldest. David would scarcely have tried to earn Michal if Saul had tricked him in a similar bargain.

17. For Saul said, better as bringing out the circumstantial clause: **now Saul had said** (to himself). **My life** should be *my kinsfolk* to which *my father's family in Israel* is an explanatory gloss. David's idea was that his origin was too humble to permit an alliance with the family of the king, then though Saul had once been humble too. It appears that in spite of his objections Saul persisted in his offer and that David won the victories demanded by Saul. When David had thus won the wife she was given to another, for which act G. brings in as a reason that she was afraid of David. **Adriel the Meholathite** appears in 2 Sam. 21:8 as the husband of Michal, by whom she had borne five sons who were put to death by David. **Meholah** or *Abel Meholah*, Judg. 7:22, was in the valley of the Jordan. It was the home of Elisha the prophet, 1 Kings 19:16.

- David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite  
 20. to wife. And Michal Saul's daughter loved David:  
 21. and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. And  
 Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare  
 to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be  
 against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou  
 shalt this day be my son in law a second time. And  
 22. Saul commanded his servants, *saying*, Commune with  
 David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight  
 in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore  
 23. be the king's son in law. And Saul's servants spake  
 those words in the ears of David. And David said,  
 Seemeth it to you a light thing to be the king's son in  
 law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly es-  
 24. teemed? And the servants of Saul told him, saying,

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David marries Michal the daughter of Saul, vs. 20-29. 20. **Loved** or *fell in love with*. As Jonathan had at once been attracted to David, so now the king's daughter is won by his attractions. **They told**, presumably the courtiers to whom Michal's secret had been revealed. **Pleased him** because he discerned the base use to which he would put his daughter's affections, making it a snare to entrap his enemy.

21. **Said** either to himself as v. 17 or to his informers who conducted the negotiations with David. The last part of the verse is lacking in G. rightly, for it conflicts with the narrative following. **A second time** is not a correct rendering, but it is hard to say what is right. Literally we have *with two*, perhaps meaning *with two daughters* and implying that Merab had been given to David, or that he was still working to win her. The whole verse may be editorial as v. 25 sufficiently explains Saul's purpose.

22. The king's pleasure and the courtiers' love are cited as a sufficient ground for the high alliance, but Saul does not expect David to accept such an offer, otherwise his plot would fail.

23. **Poor** is a strong word in the original indicating very slender means indeed. **Lightly esteemed** suggests obscurity. David's family had not distinguished themselves. From such a source, however, great kings may come.

25. On this manner spake David. And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. Now Saul thought
26. to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law. And the days
27. were not expired; and David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred <sup>1</sup> men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his
28. daughter to wife. And Saul saw and knew that the

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<sup>1</sup> G. *one hundred*.

25. **Dowry.** The word really means the price paid for a wife, for wives were sold and the purchase money went to the bride's father. David's reference to his poverty meant that he could not pay the large price necessary to secure a princess. Foreskins were the mark of the Philistines' inferiority, cf. 17:26. In Ps. 118:10-12, *circumcise* is used to denote destruction. **Make David fall.** It is clear that the Philistines were regarded as a desperate foe in that Saul felt sure that David's attempt to procure a hundred dead bodies of Philistines would result in his own death.

26. **Days were not expired** implies that a time limit had been set in order to increase the danger of the undertaking. In that case it would have been referred to in the negotiations. On the basis of the omission in G. we may regard the clause as an interpolation, or connected with Merab's marriage. The words would fit well at the end of v. 18.

27. **His men** would mean the body of which he had been appointed commander, v. 13. **Two hundred** may be an exaggeration to exalt David. It appears that David exactly met the king's terms, for the word rendered **gave in full tale** means *to fill, complete or satisfy*. It contains no hint of a work of supererogation. **Saul gave.** Had the king dishonorably withheld Merab previously, he would probably have adopted the same tactics now.

David's growing favor, vs. 28-30. The section duplicates vs. 14-16.

28. **The Lord with David.** Saul recognized the fact from the

- LORD was with David; and Michal Saul's daughter
29. loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul was David's enemy continually.
30. Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, as often as they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.
19. And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should slay David. But Jonathan
2. Saul's son delighted much in David. And Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to slay thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself in the morning, and abide in a <sup>1</sup> secret place, and hide

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<sup>1</sup> Or *the*.

wonderful feat David had performed. The last clause is better as G.: *and all Israel loved him*. Michal's love was related in v. 20.

29 f. Saul's fear was increased because of the evidence of Jahveh's favor, for by this favor he himself had become king. The last half of v. 29 and v. 30 are lacking in G.; v. 30 contains a general summary of David's continued successes over the Philistines and of his consequent increase in fame. The evidence in later sections indicates that David did not wage war with this people. The story of David and Michal is resumed in 19 : 11.

Saul issues a decree that David be slain, but is reconciled through Jonathan's mediation, 19 : 1-7. 1. **Slay David.** His attempt to accomplish David's destruction by a plot having failed, God apparently protecting him, Saul resolved to take a surer means to gain his end. As the order was general, we may suppose that any one of his officers was directed to slay David at the first opportunity. **Delighted in David** is scarcely necessary after 18 : 1-5, except as it may explain Jonathan's present action.

2. **Morning** presupposes that Jonathan's warning is given in the evening. David was emphatically cautioned to be on his guard and to remain concealed **in the secret place**, showing that Jonathan regarded the danger as serious. The hiding place was evidently well known to both, for Jonathan plans to lead Saul to the same locality, v. 3.

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3. thyself: and I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and if I see aught, I will tell thee.
  4. And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to
  5. thee-ward very good: for he put his life in his hand, and smote the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great victory for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent
  6. blood, to slay David without a cause? And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the LORD liveth, he shall not be put to death.
  7. And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as beforetime.
  8. And there was war again: and David went out, and
- 

3. The narrative presupposes the execution of Jonathan's plan; the morning had come; David had retired to the hiding place in the wild land (the true sense of "field" here); and Jonathan under some pretext had led his father close to the spot. The appeal is first to the king's sense of justice: he should not commit a wrong against one who had always been loyal to him.

5. **The Philistine** evidently refers to ch. 17, and therefore Jonathan's appeal is based on that exploit. **Innocent blood** is a combination first occurring in Deut. The cities of refuge were instituted as a safeguard against the shedding of innocent blood, Deut. 19:10.

7. Saul's decree had been countermanded, v. 6, and now, Saul presumably having departed, David is called from hiding to learn the news. The story is not very consistent, for the plan had been carefully made to have the interview in David's hearing. *As before-time*, i. e., David became court-musician and armor-bearer again as he had been before his degradation, 18:13.

Saul's attempt upon David's life, vs. 8-10. cf. 18:10 f. 8.



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- fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a
9. great slaughter; and they fled before him. And an evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand; and David played
10. with his hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the spear; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the spear into the wall:
11. and David fled, and escaped that night. And Saul sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night,
12. to-morrow thou shalt be slain. So Michal let David
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The great success achieved by David in the war, instead of winning Saul's favor, stirred up his jealousy again, 18:8, and this brought on an attack of his disease. The verse may be an editorial connecting link.

10. **Even to the wall** is lacking in G. There would be no point in trying to pin David to the wall. **Slipped away** is doubtful, as the word means *open or separate*. *Jumped or dodged* would be better. Saul hurled the spear, but as David dodged, it went into the wall, from which it may have been inferred that the king had meant to transfix him to the wall. *Escaped or slipped away* as he went to his own home. **That night** belongs to the next paragraph.

Michal enables David to escape, vs. 11-17. 11. It is better to begin with G.: *and it came to pass that night*. This verse is now usually connected directly with 18:27, so that this took place on the first night after the marriage. But David's home here seems to have a rather settled state as if he and Michal had lived there for some time. **David's house**. The possession of a home of his own probably followed his marriage. **And to slay**. As rendered the emissaries of Saul were to slay David, but that clearly was not intended as v. 15 shows that Saul meant to kill David himself. Therefore we should omit a conjunction so that we have *to guard him* [against escape] *that he might slay him in the morning*. Saul had learned that David had gone to his house, and apparently a friendly voice had warned Michal.

12. **Through the window**, a means of escape mentioned in Josh. 2:15, Acts 9:25. Such a means of exit was so difficult that the window

down through the window: and he went, and fled,  
 13. and escaped. And Michal took the teraphim, and  
 laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' *hair* at the  
 14. head thereof, and covered it with the clothes. And  
 when Saul sent messengers to take David, she <sup>1</sup> said,  
 15. He is sick. And Saul sent the messengers to see  
 David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I  
 16. may slay him. And when the messengers came in,  
 behold, the teraphim was in the bed, with the pillow  
 17. of goats' *hair* at the head thereof. And Saul said unto

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<sup>1</sup> Better, *they*.

was not guarded. Michal shows her love in a practical way, though she knew it would sorely displease the king.

13. **Teraphim.** An idol or household deity here evidently having the shape and size of a man, *cf.* on 15 : 23. Michal wanted to gain time, and in case the watchman inspected the house, the teraphim was made to look like David. **Pillow** is hardly right, but the real meaning is unknown. The sense is clear, however. The head of the teraphim could not pass for David's for lack of hair. Michal put some object made from a goat-skin at the place where the head would be, and so completed the disguise.

14. **Messengers,** evidently not the same ones named in v. 11; the former were to watch the house, the latter to bring David into Saul's presence. **He is sick.** Michal had doubtless shown the supposed invalid confined to his bed.

15. **To see David** cannot be right, for the messengers had already seen him, or what was supposed to be him, and their errand now was to seize him. Smith reads: *to the house of David.* It is best to transpose v. 14a and v. 15a.

16. On their former visit the messengers had been satisfied with a glance at the figure in the bed and Michal's statement. Their orders now require a nearer view, and the deception appears.

17. The messengers reported the trick to Saul and he evidently sent for his daughter to reprove her for shielding his enemy. **Why should I kill thee** is hardly as strong as the original, which may be rendered *lest I kill thee.* Michal feared to tell Saul that she had discovered his evil design, probably through a disaffected messenger, and had planned David's escape. The story she made up was self-evidently false, but Saul was not very acute.

Michal, Why hast thou deceived me thus, and let mine enemy go, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?

18. Now David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him.  
 19. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth  
 20. in Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul,  
 21. and they also prophesied. And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and  
 22. they also prophesied. Then went he also to Ramah,

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David finds asylum with Samuel at Ramah, vs. 18-24 *cf.* *Introd.* 18 f. **To Samuel.** The intimation is that David had fled to Samuel for protection, showing a relation of this story to 16:1-13. **Naioth** is doubtful. My guess from its use in this passage is that it is the name of some particular place in Ramah; G. adds *in Ramah*, as we have in v. 19. **Told Saul.** This spy system was evidently in active operation.

20. **Samuel standing as head over them** is a parenthetical clause and not a part of the explanation of the contagion of the prophetic frenzy. The messengers were unable to seize David because they were rendered powerless by the ecstatic state. Smith calls this David's "miraculous protection"; there is certainly nothing miraculous about it, although the frenzy was attributed to the presence of the spirit of God. But the same spirit produced great physical strength.

21. We have to assume either that the messengers returned and reported the condition of affairs, or that they were detained in Ramah, by exhaustion after their frenzy, the tidings reaching Saul by others.

22. In G. the verse begins very aptly: *and Saul was moved with anger*, because his plans were thwarted, and he was again denied the victim he sought. First the general locality is named **Ramah**,

- and came to the great well that is in Secu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And  
 23. one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the spirit of God came upon him also, and he went on, and proph-  
 24. esied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?  
 20. And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and

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and then the particular place where Saul made his inquiries, **to the great well that is in Secu**, for which G. gives a more intelligible reading: *to the pit of the threshing-floor on the bare hill*. Saul's informers told him no more than he had known already, v. 19.

23 f. To make sense it is necessary to omit the first **Naioth in Ramah**, for what Saul did on the way should precede the announcement of his arrival. The description of the prophetic frenzy is not exaggerated. In the wild dances, Saul stripped off his outer and heavy robe, which would impede his action. **Naked** is not to be taken literally; it describes a condition in which one is only clad in the short tunic, *cf.* Is. 20 : 2. The terrific strain of the frenzy is shown from the duration of the collapse. There were two versions of the origin of this proverb (*cf.* also 10 : 10 f.), as there are about the origin of many proverbs. The scene would not be very strange in the case of the mad king, nor would it be remarkable in view of the fact that his messengers had also caught the frenzy. It is otherwise in 10 : 10 f.

Ch. 20 is peculiarly difficult. In this story David is expected to attend the feast at Saul's table, and Jonathan knows of no hostility towards his friend, a situation hard to fit in after Saul's repeated efforts to slay David. Moreover the story is in part badly told. It begins smoothly, vs. 1-8, and ends clearly, vs. 20-42, but the intermediate part is confusing. In one place David proposes the test, vs. 5-7, in another place Jonathan puts the matter as a plan of his own, vs. 18 f. The plain reference to David's future glory in the perplexing section, vs. 9-19, shows a late hand. It is impossible to see any reason why Jonathan and David should retire "to the field" in the midst of their conversation. It is probably unnecessary

- said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father,
2. that he seeketh my life? And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father doeth nothing either great or small, but that he discloseth it unto me: and why should my father hide this thing
  3. from me? it is not so. And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father knoweth well that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between
  4. me and death. Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for

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to go further than to hold that vs. 11-17 are a late addition, the insertion of which led to other slight modifications. On the historical problem, *cf.* Introduction.

Jonathan devises a plan to ascertain Saul's attitude towards David, 20:1-24a. 1. **Fled** presumably while Saul was helpless as the result of his prophetic frenzy. The passage is evidently redactional to connect passages originally quite unrelated. We should transpose with G. and read: *came into the presence of Jonathan and said.*

2. **It is not so** is a very emphatic assertion like "there is nothing in it." Jonathan flatly denies any hostile purpose on Saul's part towards David, on the ground that he has never heard of it, and that Saul took no steps even in small matters without revealing his intentions (literally *uncovering his ear*) to him. Plainly this story is quite independent of 19:1 f.

3 f. **Sware moreover**, really *swear again*. There seems to be no place here for taking an oath and it is better to follow G., *and David said in reply. Lest he be grieved*. G. gives a better reason for Saul's keeping his son in the dark: *lest he tell David*, and so thwart the king's plans. **Thy soul** is often no more than an emphatic pronoun, and we should render *as thou livest*. The same rule applies to **thy soul desireth**, the verb coming from G. Here the Hebrew text is good: *whatever thou sayest I will do for thee*. Jonathan gives up protesting his father's innocence. He realizes that his friend has come to him to secure his aid, and now asserts his readiness to comply with any request that David should make.



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5. thee. And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit <sup>1</sup> with the king <sup>1</sup> at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto <sup>1</sup> the third day <sup>1</sup> at even.
6. If thy father miss me at all, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Beth-lehem his city: for it is the yearly sacrifice there for all the family.
7. If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be wroth, then know that evil is determined
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<sup>1</sup> Omit G.

5. David now unfolds his plan to ascertain Saul's attitude, and it would appear that David himself is ignorant on that point. The real aim of David's plea may be to secure permission to absent himself from the feast, knowing how dangerous it would be for him to come into the presence of the king. **New moon** was an ancient festival and it is observed scrupulously by the king. The only rite indicated here is the feasting. **I should not fail to sit.** Driver has shown that it was David's custom to sit at the royal table every day. Therefore he follows G. in which David says: *I will not sit to eat with the king.* The test is to see how the king will take David's absence. **The field** means the wild lands. **Third day at even** is hardly to be drawn from the text. *Third* is an interpolation because David was obliged to hide till the third day, though that time could not be anticipated, and we should have here simply *until evening*. David naturally expected Saul's attitude to show itself the moment his absence was noted.

6. **Miss me.** In a company of four, one would surely be missed. The word means *observe*, and David's idea is: *if thy father observe my absence*, i. e., takes any notice of it, as he did only on its repetition on the second day. On the first day the king missed David and speculated to himself on David's absence, but as he made no comment, Jonathan was silent. **Yearly sacrifice.** This is precisely the same sort of festival that was kept by Elkanah, 1 : 3, 2 : 19.

7. This test is almost like a sign, though it would be a natural assumption that if Saul approved of Jonathan's act, it would indicate a favorable attitude towards David. **If he be wroth.** G. has here as v. 10 *if he answer thee roughly*. **Evil is determined by him** is not quite exact. The phrase is: *evil from him is complete*, i. e., the evidence that harm will come from him is sure. The conception of the sign is clear from the expressions used.



8. by him. Therefore deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: but if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy  
 9. father? And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I should at all know that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it  
 10. thee? Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell

8. **Covenant of the Lord** is an agreement which Jahveh is called upon to witness, and therefore peculiarly binding. In 18 : 3 we learn of a covenant, but it is not there called a covenant of Jahveh. Cf. also 23 : 18. **Iniquity.** David like Job stands upon his innocence, a point important to be noted. He asks Jonathan to be his executioner if he has committed a capital offense. If David is brought into Saul's presence, he will be slain without being guilty of crime. The question must mean that unless Jonathan gives him leave, he will have to appear before Saul, and so in effect Jonathan will bring him there. The situation is of course quite inconsistent with c. 19.

9. Scholars are divided as to the meaning and interpretation of this difficult verse. I think we should emend slightly and render: *and J. said, far be it from me that I should know that evil from my father was determined against thee, and did not let thee know it.* In answer to David's plea that Jonathan force him not into the king's presence, Jonathan asserts his readiness to take the grave step of informing David and so interfering with the king's plan. That point settled, the next step is to agree on a means of notifying David of the result of the test.

10. **If perchance** is based partly on G. and is usually accepted. But while the text is thus made easy, there is another difficulty, for no provision is made in case Saul answers Jonathan gently. Budde says that in that case Jonathan could bring his own message, but as a matter of fact the sequel shows that Jonathan's plan carefully provided for a cryptic signal in both cases. In the first place the text has: *who shall tell me or what thy father answers thee roughly?* Emendation is obviously vital, but it should be thorough, and must meet the conditions. The simplest is to drop two words, and we have: *who shall tell me what thy father answers thee?* But it is difficult to see how *or* and *roughly* crept in to destroy the sense, and a more sweeping supposition may be justified, as: *who shall tell me if what thy father answers thee is good or rough?* Vs. 11-17 interrupts the story, for Jonathan's answer to David's question is found in vs. 18 ff. It is impossible

me if perchance thy father answer thee roughly?

11. And Jonathan said unto David, Come and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

12. And Jonathan said unto David, The LORD, the God of Israel, *be witness*; when I have sounded my father about this time to-morrow, *or* the third day, behold, if there be good toward David, shall I not then send

13. unto thee, and disclose it unto thee? The LORD do so to Jonathan, and more also, should it please my father to do thee evil, if I disclose it not unto thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

14. And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the  
15. kindness of the LORD, that I die not: but also thou

to see any reason for the adjournment to the wild country, and the references to David's greatness makes the passage suspicious. In many places the text is corrupt or so difficult it is hard to understand. Even so the passage is only a repetition of Jonathan's assertion that he would not withhold information from David.

12. This verse is corrupt and difficult, but is clearer in G.: *and J. said to D., Jahveh the God of Israel knows that I will sound my father . . . and behold, if there is good concerning David, I will send thee word to the field.*

13. A more solemn affirmation is now made because it would be both more important and more difficult to convey the tidings if Saul were hostile. **Jahveh be with thee as he was with my father** points to David's enthronization. The verse repeats v. 9.

14. **While yet I live** is a suspicious effort to avoid a plain reference to David's kingdom. We should render, *if I am still alive*, i. e., when thou dost become king. **That I die not**, should read, *but if I am dead*, and connects with the following demand that David should spare the family of Jonathan. The whole thing seems to depend upon the actual treatment of the family of Jonathan by David.

15 f. To get the true sense we must emend freely with the aid of G., the result being: *when Jahveh cuts off the enemies of David, each one from the face of the ground, if he [David] shall cut off Jonathan with*

- shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever:  
 no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of  
 16. David every one from the face of the earth. So  
 Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David,  
*saying*, And the LORD shall require it at the hand of  
 17. David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to  
 swear again, for the love that he had to him: for he  
 18. loved him as he loved his own soul. Then Jonathan  
 said unto him, To-morrow is the new moon: and thou  
 19. shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. And  
 when thou hast stayed three days, thou shalt go down  
 quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide  
 thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt re-  
 20. main by the stone Ezel. And I will shoot three

*the house of Saul, then Jahveh will require it at the hand of David. The enemies of David are those who stand in the way of his reaching the throne. Jonathan assumes that David will follow the usual course in a revolution and exterminate the whole house of his predecessor. This stipulation is that if he lives, David shall spare his life, and that if he is dead, David shall spare his family.*

17. The oath here makes any covenant in v. 16 superfluous. Jonathan exacts another oath of David to keep the terms he has just proposed. It may be that G. is right in making Jonathan swear to David, a situation more in harmony with the motive of Jonathan's great love. Jonathan would swear to aid David in keeping out of the toils of Saul.

18 f. Jonathan proceeds now to answer David's question of v. 10, but speaks as if he were proposing the plan already made by David. The rendering of v. 19 is very uncertain, and there is doubt about the text. On the whole it seems possible to render: *thou shalt go down for the full three days*, i. e., to Bethlehem, so that this visit to his family was not a mere pretext, then David was to go into the hiding place agreed upon. **When the business was in hand** is really *on the day of the deed*, an occurrence well known to Jonathan and David, but of which we are entirely ignorant. **The stone Ezel** marks the exact locality more definitely. It is better, however, to read with G.: *by yonder mound*.

20. **Three arrows.** As a matter of fact Jonathan shot but one,

- arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a  
 21. mark. And, behold, I will send the lad, *saying*, Go,  
 find the arrows.<sup>1</sup> If I say unto the lad, Behold, the  
 arrows <sup>1</sup> are on this side of thee: take them, and come;  
 for there is peace to thee and no hurt, as the LORD  
 22. liveth. But if I say thus unto the boy, Behold, the  
 arrows <sup>1</sup> are beyond thee: go thy way; for the LORD  
 23. hath sent thee away. And as touching the matter  
 which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD is  
 between thee and me for ever.  
 24. So David hid himself in the field: and when the new

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<sup>1</sup>G. *Arrow.*

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and the whole plan involves the use of but a single arrow. We should probably read: *on the third day I will shoot an arrow.* The pretense of shooting at a target was of course a part of the secret plan to avoid suspicion of David's hiding place.

21. **The lad** is not mentioned before, yet is a natural accompaniment of one practicing archery. We should read *send the lad to find the arrow.* **Take them** is addressed to David as our text stands, but that cannot be right, for David would not be expected to retrieve the arrows. The words must be addressed to the servant, who would be sent a distance away, so as to see where the arrow fell; making a necessary correction we get: *the arrow is this side of thee, arise and come.* Jonathan would shoot the arrow short, and then his words would mean to David that it was safe for him to come back. In that case, though, all this elaborate precaution would not be necessary.

22. The sign of Saul's hostility was the shooting of an arrow beyond the boy. **The Lord hath sent**, by giving him timely warning, and by absolving him of any further obedience to Saul's court.

23. **The matter** is the agreement just reached. It is a question of life and death, and so a divine obligation is added to make it binding and impressive. With G. it is necessary to read: *Jahveh is witness between thee and me.*

Jonathan discovers Saul's evil intentions concerning David, vs. 24-34. 24. **The new moon was come**, on the day after the agreement was made between Jonathan and David. **Sat down**, etc., or better with G. *came to the table to eat*, cf. v. 29. The king's sitting down comes in v. 25.

moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.  
 25. And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon the seat by the wall; and Jonathan stood up, and Abner sat by Saul's side: but David's place was  
 26. empty. Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him,  
 27. he is not clean; surely he is not clean. And it came to pass on the morrow after the new moon, *which was the second day*, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat,<sup>1</sup> neither yesterday, nor  
 28. to-day? And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to<sup>2</sup> Beth-lehem:  
 29. and he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath

<sup>1</sup> G. *the table* as v. 29.<sup>2</sup> G. adds *his city*.

25. **By the wall.** The king's place is very particularly described. The seat was evidently so placed that Saul had his back to the wall. **Stood up** or *rose up* is inappropriate, and we should read with G.: *Jonathan was opposite*; that he was sitting is clear from v. 34. Abner sat between Saul and his son on one side, and David's empty seat was evidently opposite Abner.

26. **Spake not anything.** Saul had evil designs on David, but he was powerless in David's absence, and therefore he was silent so as not to disclose his purpose. **Befallen him.** Saul's idea is that an accidental defiling (Budde suggests Deut. 23 : 11) of David, and as this was a religious feast, he could not eat until purification was effected. **Clean.** G. avoids the tautology, reading: *he is unclean, and has not been purified*, because after the defilement, time had not served.

27. **Unto Jonathan.** Because of the known intimacy between the two, the king assumes that Jonathan will know why David was absent. Possibly he was irritated because an explanation had not been volunteered. His own theory, of course, broke down at the continued absence on the second day of the feast.

28 f. Jonathan states very fully and forcibly the excuse which had been devised, v. 6. It is not impossible that David had actually gone to Bethlehem, *cf.* on v. 19.



commanded me *to be there*: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he is not come unto  
 30. the king's table. Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of a perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own shame, and  
 31. unto the shame of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be stablished, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch <sup>1</sup> him unto me, <sup>1</sup> for he shall surely  
 32. die. And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore should he be put to death?  
 33. what hath he done? And Saul cast his spear at him to

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<sup>1</sup> G. *The young man.*

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30. **Against Jonathan**, because he had allowed the enemy to escape from his hand at least for the time being. The anger of Saul was heightened because another such favorable chance to strike David down might not come again soon. Jonathan may have exceeded his rights in giving David leave of absence. **Perverse, rebellious woman** is a doubtful rendering of a very difficult text. Many follow a slightly amended text and get: *son of a rebellious girl*, i. e., a runaway slave or one who has departed from the paths of virtue. Saul had married while he was an obscure peasant, and his wife's social status may have been very humble. Abusing the son by casting reproach on his origin is not uncommon. **Hast chosen** or better with G., *art a companion of*. **Mother's nakedness**. The disloyalty of the son brings shame to his mother. Saul may also mean that Jonathan's loss of the throne brings nakedness to his mother.

31. Saul now discloses his fear of David as a rival, the natural construction for him to put on the song of the women, 18 : 7. It is more forcible to read with G. simply: *thy kingdom shall not be established*. If David lives, he will be a menace to the succession. Saul seems to have felt no doubt that he could maintain himself against David.

33. Jonathan's question incensed the king to the point that he came near slaying his son. **Cast** implies that he tried to slay Jona-



- smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was deter-  
 34. mined of his father to put David to death. So Jona-  
 than arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat  
 no meat the second day of the month: for he was  
 grieved for David, because his father had done him  
 shame.
35. And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan  
 went out into the field at the time appointed with  
 36. David, and a little lad with him. And he said unto his  
 lad, Run, find now the arrows which I shoot. And as  
 37. the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. And when  
 the lad was come to the place of the arrow which  
 Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and  
 38. said, Is not the arrow beyond thee? And Jonathan  
 cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And  
 Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows,<sup>1</sup> and came to

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<sup>1</sup> Arrow.

than and failed. The word may be rendered as Gr. *raised*, and that is better, for he could hardly have failed if he had attempted to strike. Further, it appears that Jonathan did not leave his seat, v. 34. The king threatened Jonathan, and his act convinced the latter that David's life was indeed in great danger.

34. Jonathan in turn was angered, so that he refused the food at his father's table, even though it was a religious festival. **Done him shame** in accusing of crime one who was guilty of no wrong.

David's apprehension is confirmed by Jonathan, and he takes flight, vs. 35-42. 35. **At the time appointed.** The word stresses rather the appointment than time; indeed it often means place; or here both, and we might well render *for the meeting with David*.

36 f. The plan to warn David by the words to the lad who was to retrieve the arrows is now carried out. The expressions vary somewhat from those used in v. 21 f., but such differences are not uncommon.

38. **Make speed, haste,** should be rendered *hasten quickly*. The words ostensibly addressed to the boy are intended to impress upon the concealed David the urgency of the danger.

39. his master. But the lad knew not anything: only  
 40. Jonathan and David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his weapons unto his lad, and said unto him,  
 41. Go, carry them to the city. And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a *place* toward the South, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and  
 42. wept one with another, until David exceeded. And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD shall be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.
21. Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech came to meet David trembling, and

40. **Weapons** includes the bow and other arrows which Jonathan had. The boy we are told, v. 39, knew nothing of David's presence or of the signal that had been given, and to keep him in ignorance he is sent back to the city while his master has a few parting words with his friend. Smith thinks this interview due to the grace of the redactor, because the danger would be too great. But brave men will often run serious risks for sentiment, and neither Jonathan nor David was timid.

41. The place was that mentioned in v. 19 and we should read here also: *from the side of the mound*. As soon as David heard the dismissal of the boy, great as the peril was to him, he emerged from his hiding place once more to greet his trusty friend. **David exceeded** is improbable. We may follow G. and get *they wept . . . to excess*. But the text is probably corrupted more deeply than that.

42. Jonathan invites David to depart in safety because they are mutually bound to protect each other by a solemn covenant in the name of Jahveh.

At the temple of Nob David obtains holy bread and a sword, 21: 1-9. 1. **Nob** is in Benjamin and not very far from Jerusalem, Neh. 11: 32, Is. 10: 32. David apparently started towards his own home. **Trembling**, cf. 16: 4. David as the captain of a troop had journeyed with his men, and Ahimelech was alarmed at the unusual spectacle.

said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know anything of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed the young men to such and such a place. Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or whatsoever there is present. And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is holy bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women.<sup>1</sup> And David answered the priest, and said

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds: *they might eat it.*

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2. To avoid suspicion David makes up a story of a secret mission to account for his being alone. A retinue would attract too much attention. To secure as much provision as possible he further says he has directed his men to meet him at a **certain place**, an obscure expression for which G. has the interesting reading *at a place called Faith of God*.

3. The specific request for five loaves does not fit well after the general inquiry, and it is therefore better to read with Gr: *and now if there are five loaves of bread under thy hand, give them into my hand, or whatever may be found*. The five loaves indicate that David often travelled with a small band. As there was a large company of priests living at the sanctuary, he would naturally expect to find a good store of bread.

4. **Common bread** is that ordinarily eaten for food. The holy bread, which had been used as an offering, could be eaten by any one who was clean, and probably served as the ordinary food of the large company of priests, to whose use it was restricted in the later laws. According to the ideas of the age any sexual intercourse was defiling for a time. (See art. "Unclean," Hastings, *Dict. Bib.*)

5. In our text David's assurance is obscure. It is best to render: *Assuredly women had been kept from us as heretofore when I came out*. Then David asserts that though the mission was a common one, in contrast to the sacred mission of war, not requiring offerings or

- unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days; when I came out, the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was but a common journey; how much more then to-day shall
6. their vessels be holy? So the priest gave him holy *bread*: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread
  7. in the day when it was taken away. Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged
  8. to Saul. And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with
  9. me, because the king's business required haste. And

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oracles, the vessels of the company were ceremonially clean. One point seems to be clear: that David was particular about cleanness even for a profane enterprise. The vessels have been explained as the sacks in which the men carried their provisions, as their weapons, and as their bodies or euphemistically as in N. T. for the sexual organs. In view of the priests' requirement, the last theory seems most fitting.

6. **Shewbread** is literally *bread of presence*, bread that has been consecrated by the presence of Jahveh. This bread was kept on the altar until replaced by fresh bread, the change according to the late law being made on the Sabbath, Lev. 24 : 8.

7. The mention of Doeg is important in view of the tragic sequel to David's visit described in 22 : 9 ff. **Detained** indicates that Doeg had visited the sanctuary for some ceremony that was not yet completed. Though a foreigner he was freely admitted to the privileges of the temple. **Chiefest of the herdsmen** is an impossible rendering. We may read with G.: *the manager of Saul's mules*, or with Grätz, followed by Driver, *the mightiest of Saul's runners*.

9. So far as it goes this statement confirms the story in ch. 17 of David's slaughter of Goliath. If the latter's sword were as large proportionately as his other weapons, 17 : 5-7, it would have been pretty heavy for David. **Goliath** is, however, probably a gloss.

the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the vale of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.<sup>1</sup>

10. And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul,  
 11. and went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying,

12.                   Saul hath slain his thousands,  
                           And David his ten thousands.

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds: *and he gave it to him.*

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The ephod is here an image such as Gideon made, Judg. 8 : 27. The sword was laid up in the temple as a trophy, and its being at Nob indicates that this was a favorite resort for David.

David's flight leads him to Gath, when he finds fresh danger, vs. 10-15. The passage is from a different source than vv. 1-9, and describes an initial flight from Saul; David deems the danger so great that he abandons his own country. He is seized by the Philistines and taken before Achish who releases him in the belief, that he is deranged. Cf. *Introd.*

11. **The king of the land** is usually regarded as an indication of the poor historical insight of the writer. It is barely possible that *king* is used in a loose sense, the Philistines meaning that David rather than Saul was the real power in Israel. The song which confirmed the suspicions of the Philistine courtiers is repeated from 18 : 7.

12 f. **Laid up** suggests storing in memory, a wrong idea here; render *took these words to heart*. David knew the natural course for one recognized as an enemy, and had good reason to fear for his life. But he was resourceful always. His course of action was suggested by his close association with the mad king of Israel and by the fact that the person of an insane man was held sacred. **In their hands** suggests that David had been seized by the Philistines. **Scrabbled** is not as good as the reading of G., *drummed*, i. e., with his fingers. **His spittle**. David was imitating frothing from the mouth to indicate the severity of his attack.

- And David laid up these words in his heart, and was
13. sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of
14. the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man
15. is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me? Do I lack mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?
22. David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave of Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to
2. him. And every one that was in distress, and every

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14. The king's reproof of his subjects can best be explained by supposing that on his way to Gath David was sized and taken to the king, that he might pass judgment on him.

15. Achish's question shows that he had enough madmen, probably such as were found in any country. It is not necessary to assume any plethora, but the king naturally did not want any more. There is no sequel to this story.

(2) *Saul's decline and David's rise, 22 : 1-28 : 3*

David becomes the leader of a band of outlaws, 22 : 1-5. This section is important as it marks an epoch in David's career, when he becomes for the first time the leader of a force of men that were his own. Never again does he appear as a solitary fugitive. His action in organizing this band is a step towards the throne. 1. **Cave.** In v. 5 it is clear that David's habitat is a stronghold. In 2 Sam. 23 : 13 f. and 1 Chron. 11 : 15 f. we have the same combination of *cave* and *stronghold*. Most scholars follow Wellhausen and read *stronghold* here. **Adullam** was in the lowlands of Judah, the general region of David's home. **Father's house.** David was proscribed as an outlaw, involving his family in danger, and so his clan gathers to support him and to protect themselves.

2. **Distress** or *straits* covers trouble of various kinds. **In debt** so hopelessly that the victim was in danger of being sold as a slave.



one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

3. And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till
4. I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with
5. him all the while that David was in the hold. And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hereth.

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**Discontented**, literally, *bitter of spirit*, because of wrongs suffered, or for failure to get along in the social order. David's band was therefore made up of this own clan who were in danger, and of various lawless elements who sought relief under his banner. Under David's capable leadership this rough material was welded into a most effective fighting force. Some time must have been consumed in mustering this force.

3. **Come forth** is not very appropriate; it is better to read with Vulgate *dwelt*, and dispense with the interpolated *and be*. **What God will do** shows David's invariable piety, and his belief that God would direct his fortunes. His parents were in danger on his account, and so he seeks asylum for them in Moab, the home of his great-grandmother, Ruth 4 : 21 f.

5. **Gad** rather than Abiathar appears here as David's counsellor, revealing God's will to him. **Hold** or better *stronghold*, refers to Adullam, and not to Mizpeh of Moab. Gad's point is that if David remains in a fortified place with his small force, he might easily be trapped. In contrast to the fortress he was counselled to live in the **land or open country of Judah**, but the specific place called **the forest of Hereth** has not yet been identified. In a forest he would find the safest retreat.

Saul puts to death all the priests of Nob save Abiathar who escapes and joins David, vs. 6-23. This passage is the sequel to 21 : 1-9.

6. And Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him: now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk tree in Ramah,<sup>1</sup> with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing
7. about him. And Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all captains of thousands and cap-
8. tains of hundreds; that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that discloseth to me when my son maketh a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or dis-

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<sup>1</sup> G. *Bamah*, a sanctuary on a hill.

The cold-blooded murder of the innocent priests reveals the fierceness of Saul's pursuit of David.

6. The first sentence would fit admirably before v. 5 as the ground for Gad's advice, but it is so meaningless in its present place that Smith deems it an editorial insertion. The basis of Saul's action is not the discovery of David's resort, but of the treasonable relations between Jonathan and David.

7. **Benjamites.** Saul's body-guard or household was made up of members of his own tribe. He evidently strove to preserve their loyalty by generous gifts both of property and of offices. His question shows that he believed that David was trying to supplant him. He shows something of his own methods of holding his people.

8. **Conspired against me,** by silence in failing to report what it is assumed wrongly that they all knew. There are two counts in the charge. 1. The failure to report the agreement between Jonathan and David, doubtless that described in ch. 20 of which Saul had heard. 2. The failure to report Jonathan's moving David against Saul. This idea was due to Saul's mad jealousy, for there is no hint in our sources that Jonathan went any further than to aid David to escape from Saul. **Sorry.** The Hebrew word means *sick*. The translators have followed G. which reads: *has compassion on me.* **Lie in wait** is an extreme charge even for Saul, unless we put this incident after chs. 24, 26. It suffices to follow G. *stirred up my servant as an enemy against me.* As Smith says, Saul's charges lie against Jonathan rather than David.

- closeth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? Then answered Doeg the Edomite,<sup>1</sup> which stood by the servants<sup>2</sup> of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.
11. Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king. And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub.
13. And he answered, Here I am,<sup>3</sup> my lord. And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? Then Ahimelech answered the king,

<sup>1</sup> G. Aramean.<sup>2</sup> G. mules.<sup>3</sup> G. inserts, *speak*.

9 f. **Doeg** (*cf.* 21 : 8) was not one of Saul's courtiers, but happened to be present, perhaps because he served under them. His report goes beyond the narrative of 21 : 1-9, for there was no mention of an oracle. As Saul includes this in the charge against Ahimelech, and the priest does not deny it, the statement is probably correct. **Goliath** is harmonistic, *cf.* on 17 : 1-18 : 5.

11. **All his father's house** and the **priests that were in Nob** are in apposition, for all of the priests belonged to the same clan, the office being held by all in the same family.

13. Saul regards the favors shown to David as acts of hostility against himself, unmindful of the fact that the priest knew nothing of Saul's quarrel with David. **To lie in wait** should be amended as v. 8, G. having the same reading in both places.

14 f. **Is taken into thy council** is a strained rendering. The text really has: *turns aside to thy obedience*. By a slight change based on G. we get a more suitable text: *is chief of thy body-guard*. Ahimelech enumerates the honors which have been conferred upon David by Saul as a sufficient justification of the services he had rendered.

- and said, And who among all thy servants is so faithful as David, which is the king's son in law, and is taken into thy council, and is honourable in thine
15. house? Have I to-day begun to inquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knoweth nothing of all this,
16. less or more. And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.
17. And the king said unto the guard that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew that he fled, and did not disclose it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to
18. fall upon the priests of the LORD. And the king said

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At the same time he asserts the loyalty of David. The priest further declares that he had habitually obtained oracles for David when he was on the king's business, and ends by declaring that neither he nor any of his company knew anything whatever of the charges which Saul now makes against David.

16. The king's judgment was based on the priest's admission that he had committed the acts that were charged. That he was innocent of any evil intention makes no difference to the king. The punishment of the whole family was unhappily quite usual, *cf.* the case of Achan, Josh. 7 : 24.

17. **Guard**, literally *runners*. These were different from the courtiers mentioned above. They ran before the royal chariot and served as a guard. To justify his severe sentence the king now falsely charges the priests with a guilty knowledge of David's flight. The persons of the priests were sacred, and the guard mutiny rather than slay them, incurring serious risk to themselves, though Saul overlooked their disobedience.

18. Doeg was a foreigner and would not stand so much in awe of the priests of Jahveh; moreover, by his readiness to tell about Ahimelech's innocent act, he appears to have been keen to stand well with Saul. **Four score and five**. The large company of priests shows that Nob was an important sanctuary at the time. G. has 305.

- to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and he slew on that day fourscore and five persons
19. that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen and asses and sheep,<sup>1</sup> with the edge of the sword.<sup>1</sup>
20. And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.
21. And Abiathar told David that Saul had slain the
22. LORD'S priests. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned *the death* of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide
23. thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: for with me thou shalt be in safeguard.

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<sup>1</sup> Omit with G.

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19. Probably the *runners* or *guard* of v. 17 executed this brutal order. Saul's vengeance was thorough.

20. **Abiathar** becomes an important figure in the history until he was deposed by Solomon on account of his participation in the rebellion of Adonijah, 1 Kings 2 : 26 f. Smith suggests that he had been left behind at Nob. It is more probable that in the confusion of the slaughter he took to his heels and got away.

22. **I have occasioned the death** gives the right sense, but it is a very free rendering of a passage which has caused much discussion. It is simplest in view of the expression *turn and fall upon* in v. 17 f. to suppose an ellipsis, *I have turned and fallen upon the life of thy family*. David realizes that his misrepresentations have been the undoing of a company of innocent men. His remark is psychologically interesting. He says he knew that Doeg would tell, and yet he went on the course to bring trouble to the priests. David refers to a knowledge perceived at the time and yet not coming sufficiently in the field of consciousness to serve as a basis for action.

23. The same person who would slay David would kill Abiathar,

23. And they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they rob the threshing-floors. Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?
2. floors. Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?
3. Then David inquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. And David and his men went to Keilah, and

therefore to protect himself he must protect the fugitive priest. It is better to transpose: *he that seeketh thy life seeketh my life.*

David rescues Keilah, but flees upon learning of Saul's purpose to attack him, 23 : 1-15. 1. **Keilah** is in the lowlands of Judah, closely bordering on the Philistine plains. David was presumably in the forest of Hereth, 22 : 5. Adullam, the first headquarters of David, was not far from Keilah, and he was still probably in the wild lands of the neighborhood. **Threshing-floors.** The invasion was evidently made by a small band of plunderers, and it was evidently harvest time. The Philistines came to rob the Judeans of their grain just after it was threshed. Doubtless some of the Keilites sought David to procure his protection.

2. **Inquired.** Divine counsel was probably obtained through God the prophet, 22 : 5; we shall see reason to believe that Abiathar had not yet joined David.

3 f. **We be afraid** points to the dangers from Saul as indicated by Gad, 22 : 5. The men mean that an attack on the Philistines would weaken them and put them in an exposed position. **In Judah** does not imply that Keilah was outside of Judean power: the contrast is between the open country and the exposed position of a town. David's second inquiry of Jahveh indicates no doubt on his part, but serves as an assurance to his men. Military discipline is not very strong in a body organized like this.

5. **And brought away their cattle** for which G. has a better reading: *and they fled from before him*, though it has the Hebrew text too, apparently a duplicate by correction. The only animals the Philistines would have would be a few beasts to carry off the grain. If



fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and slew them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

6. And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with
7. an ephod in his hand. And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by
8. entering into a town that hath gates and bars. And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to
9. Keilah, to besiege David and his men. And David knew that Saul devised mischief against him; and he

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the text is right, it would naturally follow the story of the slaughter (as it is in G.). David again flees to the wilderness because he learns of Saul's preparations to attack him in Keilah, vs. 6-15. 6. **To Keilah** implies that Abiathar joins David at Keilah after he had driven off the Philistines. Driver follows G. making Abiathar go with David to Keilah. The text is right, for otherwise the reference to the ephod should come sooner; moreover, the description of David's inquiry shows that it is different from that in vs. 2, 4. The ephod is now used for the first time. For the last clause the Hebrew text can only be rendered: *an ephod came down in his hand*. The simplest change which can be made is to read: *be brought an ephod in his hand*. The **ephod** is that from Nob, behind which the sword of the Philistine had been placed, 21 : 9. In his flight, Abiathar had gone to Nob and rescued the ephod which was of great value as an instrument of divination.

7. **Delivered** is from G. The Hebrew has *alienated*, which is unsuitable. Most scholars adopt the reading *sold or delivered*. **Shut in**, so that he can no longer run away when Saul approaches. **Gates and bars** shows that Keilah was a fortified city. Once it was surrounded by Saul's forces there would be no escape for David.

9. **Against him** is so placed in the original as to make it emphatic. The reason is, as Smith suggests, that Saul presumably had given out that he was mobilizing against the Philistines. For this reason we have **knew** instead of the usual *was told*. David had probably been *informed* of the muster of the Benjamites, and he *knew* that he would be the objective.

- said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.<sup>1</sup>
10. Then said David, O LORD, the God of Israel, thy servant hath surely heard that Saul seeketh to come to
11. Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD, the God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the
12. LORD said, He will come down. Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver up me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will
13. deliver thee up. Then David and his men, which were about six hundred,<sup>2</sup> arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told

<sup>1</sup> G. adds of *Jahveh*.<sup>2</sup> G. *four hundred*.

10. In seeking an oracle by the ephod the inquirer addresses *Jahveh*, as if *Jahveh* and the ephod were identical.

11 f. The text is evidently corrupt as one question is repeated. G. bears testimony to corruption, but offers little help to clear up the difficulty. Omitting the first query in v. 11, it appears that David seeks an authoritative reply to two questions: Will Saul come down against him as reported? Will the citizens of Keilah hand him and his men over to Saul? The first question was unnecessary as we learn in v. 9, that David knew that Saul was coming against him, and in the Syriac version this question is lacking. It looks as if G. had originally the same text, but it has been corrected partly to get closer conformity to the Hebrew. At all events the main point on which David needs light is whether the Keilites will stand by their rescuer when their city is attacked, or will save themselves any danger by turning traitor to David. The oracle confirms David's suspicions, so that he would have to contend against Saul's forces without and traitors within.

13. If our text is right David's force had increased by fifty per cent since its organization. Such an augmentation is not improbable. **Whithersoever they could go** indicates that while the danger from Saul continued, David sought no fixed abode, but moved about from place to place as he found provisions and shelter. **Forbare**. Saul gave up his expedition when he learned that David had abandoned Keilah. At this time he was not prepared to follow him on a wild chase in the wilderness.

Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth.

14. And David abode in the wilderness in the strong holds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand. And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in the wood. And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.<sup>1</sup> And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I

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<sup>1</sup> G. Jahveh.

14. This verse shows a different source, for contrary to v. 13, David abides in a definite locality and Saul engages in constant though fruitless pursuit. **Ziph** is in the barren country to the south of Hebron. Smith thinks that this name does not belong here, as the **wilderness** refers to the portion of Judah lying along the Dead Sea.

15. **Saw** seems unsuitable, and it is best with Ewald, followed by many scholars, to read *was afraid*, i. e., because Saul was in pursuit. Thus we have a motive for David's retirement to some secure place. **Wood**, or *wooded height*, the real meaning of the word, could hardly be found in the Judean wilderness. The word is apparently a proper name *in Horesh*, the location of which is unknown.

Jonathan's last interview with David, vs. 16-18. Cf. *Introd.* 16. **Into the wood**, or at *Horesh*, cf. on v. 15. **Strengthened his hand** means to sustain or encourage, sometimes by supplying means, *Judg.* 9:24, sometimes merely by word or example, *Jer.* 23:14. **In God** suggests Jonathan's assurance that David would be raised to the throne by divine power.

17. **Next unto thee**. Jonathan expresses himself as being content to occupy a subordinate place under David like his place under Saul. **Knoweth**. This assertion introduces something quite new, for we have no information to justify the statement. Jonathan declares that Saul knew that David was chosen of Jahveh to supplant him on the throne, as if the king knew of Samuel's anointing. Saul accused David of aspiring to the throne wrongly. If Saul were informed of this interview his charges in 22:8 would be justified.

shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father  
 18. knoweth. And they two made a covenant before the  
 LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan  
 19. went to his house. Then came up the Ziphites to  
 Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself  
 with us in the strong holds in the wood, in the hill  
 20. of Hachilah, which is on the south of the desert? Now  
 therefore, O king, come down, according to all the  
 desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be  
 21. to deliver him up into the king's hand. And Saul said,  
 Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have had compassion  
 22. on me. Go, I pray you, make yet more sure, and

18. **To his house** implies that Jonathan had left his home to seek David, and as he would almost certainly be with the forces of Saul, this section appears out of place in its context, which represents Saul as being in the neighborhood of David's retreat.

Saul pursues David in the wilderness, vs. 19-29 [Heb. 24 : 1ff.].  
 19. **Gibeah** shows either that this passage is unrelated to vs. 1-15, or that Saul had given up the pursuit for the time and returned home. The story implies that Saul was quite ignorant of David's whereabouts. The Ziphites were disaffected towards David or saw an opportunity to win favor from Saul by betraying a fugitive. **In the wood** or *Horesk*, cf. on v. 15. The Ziphites' description is not only repetitious, but contradictory, as **in the strongholds** implies that David moved from one desert fastness to another. If the informers had been able to locate the quarry so specifically, Saul would not need to urge them to find his haunts, v. 22. **Hachilah** is mentioned only here and 26 : 1-3. In the latter passage it appears to be in the eastern part of the desert of Judah, here in the south.

20. The Ziphites are familiar with the desert region and assure the king that they will track the fugitive to his lair if Saul will follow with a sufficient force to take him.

21. **Had compassion**, cf. 22 : 8. The Ziphites had felt the peril to Saul's throne and unlike his own tribesmen, 22 : 8, were ready to aid him in removing the danger.

22. Saul had found it impossible to catch David and did not want to be led on another fruitless chase. **It is told me** overlooks the fact that Saul himself had been the constant pursuer of David, and would hardly need to be told that his quarry was exceedingly crafty.

- know and see his place where his haunt is, *and* who hath seen him there: for it is told me that he dealth  
 23. very subtilly. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me of a certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out among all the thousands of  
 24. Judah. And they arose, and went to Ziph before <sup>1</sup> Saul. But David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah on the south of the desert.  
 25. And Saul and his men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore he came down to the rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued after David in the wilderness of  
 26. Maon. And Saul went on this side of the mountain,

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<sup>1</sup> Or *in advance of*.

23. The expansion of the instructions is largely repetitious of v. 22. The directions imply that the Ziphites were to locate David exactly and return to inform Saul who would then go with them to seek him; v. 24 implies that Saul followed them immediately. The matter is cleared up by making a bold change in the text translating *at Nakon* a proper name in 2 Sam. 6:6, instead of **of a certainty** both here and in 26:4. Saul appoints a place near the wilderness where he will meet the Ziphites after they have secured more definite knowledge of David's haunts. **Thousands of Judah** refers to the many clans which made up the tribe. Saul expresses his readiness to traverse the whole Judean wilderness once he is on David's trail. **Maon** is a hamlet south of Carmel. In the desert about this town David and his band had taken refuge. **Arabah** is the Jordan valley, extending south to include the Dead Sea.

25. **And abode**, with G. read: *which is*. David had moved upon hearing of Saul's advance, and **the rock** or *crag*, presumably a rocky ridge, marks his new position.

26. **Made haste**. In the original we find a strong word, suggesting great alarm or panic. **Compassed** is doubtful. The word is rare, and the idea of being surrounded is inconsistent with the description of the hot pursuit. Some phrase like *pressed hard upon* is more

- and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men  
 27. round about to take them. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the  
 28. Philistines have made a raid upon the land. So Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela-  
 29. hammahlekoth. And David went up from thence, and dwelt in the strong holds of Engedi.  
 24. And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying,  
 2. Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi. Then

suitable. It is clear that David was not surrounded, otherwise Saul could have taken him without serious delay to his departure to meet the Philistines. On the other hand it appears that David's band was so closely pressed that escape was becoming doubtful.

27. The Philistines held most of the land of Israel, but Saul had a small area in which his people were free. The enemy doubtless learned that he was far away with all of his armed forces and so started to plunder in the districts of Benjamin.

28. **Sela-hammahlekoth** may mean *rock of escape*, but *rock of divisions* is sounder etymologically and in better accord with the conditions. There was only the ridge of a rocky hill dividing David from his pursurers when Saul was called away. The **rock** is that of v. 25.

29. Having found traitors in this neighborhood, David transferred his forces to **En-gedi**, an oasis in the desert bordering on the Dead Sea. His new haunts are in the same general territory, because it was sparsely settled and abounded in places difficult of access.

Chs. 24 and 26 are accounts of essentially the same events, both ending with a reconciliation between Saul and David, cf. Introd. and ch. 26. David refuses to slay Saul, 24 : 1-7. 1. **From following** implies that Saul had driven the raiding Philistines back to their own borders; probably it was only a small band, cf. 23 : 27. **Wilderness of En-gedi**. In 23 : 29 *the strongholds of En-gedi*. The text is wrong in one place or the other; *wilderness* is perhaps more suitable.

2. **Three thousand** was the size of Saul's army at the beginning



- Saul took <sup>1</sup> three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks
3. of the wild goats. And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet. Now David and his men were abiding in
4. the innermost parts of the cave. And the men of David said unto him, Behold, the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy <sup>2</sup> into thine hand, and thou shalt do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose,
5. and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. And it

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds *with him*

<sup>2</sup> So G. has *enemies*.

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of his reign, 13 : 2. As David had at most six hundred men, Saul was taking no chances. Still to catch David he needed a force big enough to divide and yet leave each part strong enough to cope with David's hardy band of desperadoes. **Upon** or probably *to the east of* (Driver). Wild goats still abound in the region, but the exact spot cannot be located. It was some rocky ridge upon which the goats habitually gathered. It was evidently a wild region.

3. **Sheep cotes**, literally *walls of the flock*, may have been caves as Smith suggests, but as a cave is particularly mentioned, it is more natural here to think of fenced enclosures. The sheepfolds indicate the place to which the nomads brought their flocks from the scattered grazing lands. **To cover his feet** is a euphemism which occurs in Judg. 3 : 24 (of Eglon the king of Moab). The figure comes from the posture. **Now** suitably introduces a circumstantial clause. **Abiding**, better *siting*. It is probable that as Saul's forces approached, instead of flight David chose to risk hiding in a deep cave, where in case of discovery a few could defend themselves against superior numbers.

4. The men quote an oracle of which there is no record. The Hebrew *enemies* suggests that it was a general promise which the men apply to an individual. **Privily**, so that Saul did not detect the action. To accomplish such a feat David was able to move and act most stealthily. David evidently had formulated his whole plan, but he as yet says nothing to his men. Doubtless they had expected him as he advanced to slay the king.

5. David's act was a serious affront to the majesty of a king; cf. 2 Sam. 10 : 4 where a similar act even to ambassadors is made

came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said  
 6. unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my lord,<sup>1</sup> the LORD's anointed, to put forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's  
 7. anointed. So David checked his men with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. And Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his  
 8. way. David also arose afterward,<sup>2</sup> and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth, and did obeisance.

<sup>1</sup> Omitted in GB.<sup>2</sup> G. *after him*.

a *casus belli*. David had never before committed a hostile act against the king.

6. David's statement is not an expression of regret because he has mutilated Saul's robes, but a reply to the suggestion of his men, v. 4. The men see an opportunity to end their troubles; David declines to take it because he is unwilling to slay the anointed of Jahveh. Evidently this source knows nothing of the anointing of David.

7. **Checked** represents G.; the Hebrew has *tore in two*, too strong a word and unsuitable to the means, i. e., **words**. **Suffered not** indicates that the men were minded to rid themselves of an inveterate foe, but that David would not consent. G. makes the purpose plain reading: *would not permit them to arise and kill Saul*. At this point vs. 4, 5 would be more appropriate than where they are. The order of events would thus be; the men point out the divinely given opportunity; David refuses to strike Jahveh's anointed; the men, having no such scruples, themselves prepare to slay Saul; David restrains them, and then cuts off Saul's robe as evidence that the king was at his mercy.

Saul is convinced of David's magnanimity and makes peace with him, vs. 8-23. 8. **Obeisance**. The act was the usual homage to a person in a superior position. David prostrates himself when Saul sees him as an evidence of his recognition of Saul's royalty. In this story David deliberately puts himself in Saul's power.

9. And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearkenest thou to men's words,<sup>1</sup> saying, Behold, David seeketh thy  
 10. hurt?<sup>2</sup> Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but *mine eye* spared thee;<sup>3</sup> and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD's  
 11. anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee, though  
 12. thou huntest after my soul<sup>4</sup> to take it. The LORD

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<sup>1</sup> G. *words of the people.*    <sup>2</sup> G. *thy life.*    <sup>3</sup> G. *and I spared thee.*    <sup>4</sup> Better *life.*

9. It appears to be David's conviction that he is the victim of false charges, somebody having accused him of aiming at Saul's life. Yet David's idea is quite contrary to the origin of Saul's hostility as our sources reveal it. There is no record of any charge against David.

10. **Have seen** is unsuitable. David's act was so stealthy that Saul did not detect it. We should have *shall see*, i. e., when the evidence of Saul's danger is disclosed, v. 11. **Some bade me** would refer to the counsel of his men. G. reads: *but I refuse to slay thee*, as 26 : 23, which is good in itself, but tautologous before *and I spared thee*. It is tempting to interpret as Budde: *Jahveh delivered thee . . . and bade me slay thee; but I spared thee*. By putting Saul in David's power, Jahveh incites David to slay, even as his men suggested. But even when God offered him the life of Saul, David could not lift his hand against the anointed of Jahveh. David's position towards Saul is quite different from Samuel's.

11. **My father** is in G. attached to v. 10, *the Lord's anointed and my father*, i. e., *my king*. David thus professing his loyalty to Saul. **Huntest** makes good sense, but the Hebrew means *liest in wait*, indicating that Saul was disposing his men to trap the fugitive. G. reads, *harass*.

12. **Avenge** refers to the wrong Saul has done to David, and makes the latter look for divine punishment. David does not cherish such feelings and we might perhaps render, *vindicate*. David's words fit

judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me  
 13. of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. As  
 saith the proverb of the ancients, Out of the wicked  
 cometh forth wickedness: but mine hand shall not be  
 14. upon thee. After whom is the king of Israel come out?  
 after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after  
 15. a flea. The LORD therefore be judge, and give sen-  
 tence between me and thee, and see, and plead my  
 16. cause, and deliver me out of thine hand. And it  
 came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking  
 these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy  
 voice, my son David? <sup>1</sup> And Saul lifted up his voice,  
 17. and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more  
 righteous than I: for thou hast rendered unto me good,  
 18. whereas I have rendered unto thee evil. And thou  
 hast declared this day how that thou hast dealt well  
 with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds: *and David said, it is thy servant; my lord the king, cf. 26 : 17.*

well Budde's interpretation of v. 10. He will not seize the opening which Jahveh has made, but leaves his case in Jahveh's own hands to work it out as he will. The idea is repeated in v. 15.

13. This verse is usually regarded as an interpolation. It would mean that as wickedness comes from the wicked, and as David would do no wrong, he cannot be wicked.

14. **Dead dog** and **flea** indicate the insignificance of the quarry. It is unworthy of the king of Israel to expend his energy in pursuit, not of a menacing rival, but of a humble and powerless individual. David has in mind his lowly origin, *cf.* 18 : 18, 23, and his present straits, being utterly unable to do other than hide and flee.

16. **My son** is a recognition on Saul's part of the loyalty of David; it corresponds to *my father*, v. 11. **Wept**. Saul was very emotional, a trait enhanced by his mental infirmity. The familiar voice and the evidence of magnanimity move the king to tears. The strong emotions of the king show that he had once loved David greatly.

17. Saul's acknowledgment is emphatic: David requited him good for evil, while he had requited David evil for good.

19. me up into thine hand, thou killedst me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou
20. hast done unto me this day. And now, behold, I know that thou shalt surely be king, and that the king-
21. dom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not
22. destroy my name out of my father's house. And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.
25. And Samuel died; and all Israel gathered themselves together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> G. Maon as v. 2.

19. **His enemy.** The fact that David had not slain Saul when he had the chance proves to Saul that David does not regard him as a foe. Saul cannot conceive of any one's letting an enemy escape.

20-22. This passage recognizes David's destiny as the successor of Saul, and Saul contents himself with exacting an oath from David that he would not follow the usual course of putting to death the family of the overthrown king. If David took such an oath he certainly did not keep it, 2 Sam. 21 : 7-9. Budde deems the section an insertion from a later hand. The story ends by Saul's withdrawing from the pursuit of David, while the latter remains in the wild lands of Judah. The reconciliation is incomplete, otherwise David would have returned to his place at Saul's court.

David lays tribute upon the clans of the wilderness, ch. 25. There is no reason to question the authenticity of this story, but it seems to be out of place, for David's resolve to leave Judah, ch. 27, would naturally follow his close escape from Saul, 23 : 19-29. Perhaps this passage belongs before 23 : 19-29. 1a. This statement belongs to the life of Samuel, cf. the duplicate in 28 : 3 where at least it is appropriate. That such a fragment could have slipped in here shows what changes have been wrought in the sacred texts. **Paran** is in the far southern part of the Judean

2. And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he
3. was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and the woman was of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.
4. And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did
5. shear his sheep. And David sent ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:
6. and thus shall ye say to him that liveth *in prosperity*,

Dead Sea coast. It is difficult to make a connection for David's movement, but he probably moved about a good deal during this period of life in the wilderness.

David is about to destroy Nabal because he had refused tribute, vs. 2-13. 2. **Maon**, 23 : 24, was near Carmel and both were close to Ziph, 23 : 19 ff., 26. The region supported only one industry and so Nabal's wealth, like Job's, consisted of large flocks. **Great** means *rich*, as in Job, 1 : 3.

3. The characteristics of Nabal and his wife are sharply contrasted, the descriptions being based on this story. **Churlish**. The Hebrew word means *hard, severe*, and so perhaps *niggardly*. **Caleb** was the leader of the clan which had first taken Hebron, Josh. 15 : 13 ff. The Calebites had evidently overspread the region to the south of Hebron. Caleb means *dog* and G. has rendered here not infelicitously *dog-like*.

5. **Ten** were sent so as to have an adequate force to bring back the supplies which Nabal was expected to hand over. The shearing season is the harvest of the shepherds, and at such a time a tribute would naturally be forthcoming. **Greet** is literally *ask him of welfare*. **In my name** indicates that David had won at least a local reputation, and that he was exercising a certain authority in the desert region.

6. **To him that liveth in prosperity** is a big rendering of a single Hebrew word of three letters, the true significance of which no man knows to this day. Wellhausen's *To my brother* is approved by many; but *to him* is all that is needed. The following is best rendered as



- Peace be both unto thee, and peace be to thine house,  
 7. and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: thy shepherds have now been with us,<sup>1</sup> and we did them no hurt, neither was there aught missing unto them, all the  
 8. while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will tell thee: wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes; for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand,  
 9. unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And when

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds *in the wilderness*.

an affirmation: *now thou and thy household and all that thou hast are in peace*. David's protection has secured peace for Nabal's herds, and David hints that a return is due to him.

7. **Did them no hurt** or *put them to no shame* by plundering them and so obliging them to make a shameful report of a shortage in the flock. And David had gone further: he had not permitted the raiders of the desert to exercise their usual practice of robbing the shepherds. On the ground that he had thus afforded protection, he demands tribute. David acts as a ruler dealing with his subjects.

8. **The young men**, G. *thy young men*, making them David's messengers in both cases, and contrary to Budde, this seems to me right. David proposes that Nabal shall question his men, who were with him in the field, for confirmation of the protection he had afforded Nabal's flocks. David would not dream that their word could be doubted. **Good day** in late usage is a phrase meaning a festival, Esth. 8 : 17; here perhaps the idea is *favorable*, a day when one would expect to find Nabal gracious. **Thy servants**, etc., is surely wrong. Most writers are content to follow G., omitting *thy servants and to*. What we should have is: *unto thy servant David, the son of Jesse*. Nabal names *the son of Jesse* in his reply, therefore it must have been in the address. David was demanding, not begging, and he would never have said *thy son*. He was not asking gifts for his messengers, but for himself as chief.

9. **And ceased** is a crux. Budde thinks it means that the messengers added nothing to the words David had put in their mouths. Nowack renders *and they waited*. As Nabal was angry they would not have to linger long. Smith suggests *rested*, as the men were weary from the journey. Messengers do not deliver their message,

David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and  
 10. ceased. And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away  
 11. every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water,<sup>1</sup> and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men of whom I  
 12. know not whence they be? So David's young men turned on their way, and went back, and came and  
 13. told him according to all these words. And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword.  
<sup>2</sup> And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword:<sup>2</sup> and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred  
 14. abode by the stuff. But one of the young men told

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<sup>1</sup> G. rightly *wine*, cf. v. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Omit, G.

and then lie down to rest while an answer is composed. G. gives excellent sense, having another word and another construction: *and Nabal sprang to his feet and answered*, his action indicating the feelings expressed in his words.

10. **Servants**, really *slaves*. The taunt was true of many of David's men; probably there is a reference to David's being a fugitive from Saul.

11. **Whence they be** appears to be an attempt to answer David's claim that he was entitled to supplies because he had protected the shepherds.

13. **Every man his sword**. David was quick in his determination to wreak a terrible vengeance on Nabal. He assumes that it was his right to collect tribute, and he prepares to make Nabal an impressive example. **Two hundred** were left to guard the camp, as in 30:24 where presumably there were stores collected from other shepherds.

Abigail appeases David, vs. 14-35. 14. **David**. The speaker was one of those who had been with the flock in the wilderness, and he refers to David as a person well known to Abigail. **Flew upon them**,

- Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master;
15. and he flew upon them. But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when
16. we were in the fields: they were a wall unto us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them
17. keeping the sheep. Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his house: for he is such
18. a son of Belial, that one cannot speak to him. Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and
19. laid them on asses. And she said unto her young men, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But

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*cf.* 14 : 32, is not happy here. B.D.B. gives a suitable sense *screamed at them*.

15 f. Nabal's shepherds confirm David's protection, which had been the basis of his claim for spoils, v. 7. **Fields**, the wild lands where pasture was found. **Wall** suggests protection from the Bedouin marauders.

17. **All his house**. The servant knows how David maintains himself, that he will not endure Nabal's refusal to pay, and especially that once the sword is drawn Nabal's whole establishment will be wiped out. **Cannot speak**. The appeal is made to Abigail, for Nabal is so violent that no one dares try to persuade him of his duty.

18. **Two hundred loaves**, *cf.*, the five loaves David asked for at Nob, 21 : 3. **Two bottles** would be a modest allowance for 600 men, so we should render correctly *two skins*. The skin held several gallons. **Five measures** or *seahs* is nearly two bushels. The supplies taken by Abigail make a very substantial offering suitable to the size of David's company.

19. **Go on before me**, with the asses carrying the provisions, which she could easily overtake. That she was able to collect and despatch

20. she told not her husband Nabal. And it was so, as she rode on her ass, and came down by the covert of the mountain, that, behold, David and his men came  
 21. down against her; and she met them. Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath returned me  
 22. evil for good. God do so unto the enemies of David, and more also, if I leave of all that pertain to him by  
 23. the morning light so much as one man child. And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off her ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed  
 24. herself to the ground. And she fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me be the iniquity:

so large a train secretly indicates that Nabal was away with his shearers.

20. The meaning seems to be that Abigail was riding in a path so that she was screened, and so did not know of David's approach until she encountered him in the trail.

21. It is not clear when David said this, but it would naturally be when he mustered his forces for the attack. **Evil for good**, an insult as a reward for very useful protection from robbers.

22 f. With G. omit **the enemies of**, to conform to the usual imprecation. **Child** is misleading. The to our ears indecent expression in the original means *a male*, and David is certainly thinking chiefly of adults. Some writers render, *even a dog*. **Bowed herself**. Abigail takes the attitude of a suppliant asking a favor.

Abigail makes a long speech to David pleading that he will accept her peace-offering and forbear to take vengeance, vs. 24-31. The points she urges are: 1. The fault should be placed upon her, not because she was in the wrong, but so that she can make atonement. Perhaps also she believed David would not be so severe with a beautiful woman. 2. Nabal is of such a character that he is irresponsible, and Abigail did not know of David's request until his messengers had departed. 3. By accepting her offering for tribute, and overlooking Nabal's refusal, David would be spared the shedding of blood. 4. She seeks to mollify David by assertions of his valor and forecasts of his greatness.

- and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine  
 25. ears, and hear thou the words of thine handmaid. Let  
 not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial,  
 even Nabal:<sup>1</sup> for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is  
 his name, and folly is with him: but I thine hand-  
 maid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou  
 26. didst send. Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD  
 liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath  
 withholden thee from bloodguiltiness, and from  
 avenging thyself with thine own hand, now therefore  
 let thine enemies, and them that seek evil to my lord,  
 27. be as Nabal. And now<sup>2</sup> this present which thy  
 servant hath brought unto my lord, let it be given unto  
 28. the young men that follow my lord. Forgive, I pray  
 thee, the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD  
 will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my  
 lord fighteth the battles of the LORD; and evil shall  
 29. not be found in thee all thy days. And though man

<sup>1</sup> Omit, G.<sup>2</sup> G. adds: *take*.

25. **Nabal** means *fool*, one deficient in understanding. **Saw not**, otherwise the men would not have been sent away empty.

26. **Bloodguiltiness** is literally *from entering into blood* to which G. adds correctly *innocent* as in vs. 31 f. **Avenging** or *delivering*, cf. note on v. 31. **Them that seek**. G. has *him that seeketh* limiting the reference to Saul.

27. **Unto the young men**, either to carry back to camp, or with the flattering implication that her tribute is not really worthy the great leader's personal acceptance.

28. **Sure house** points to the royalty of David's family and indicates a late hand, which has elaborated Abigail's speech. **All thy days**, literally *from thy days*, i. e., *since thy birth*. The reference is to the past, cf. 1 Kings 1 : 6, and the verb should be in the past tense. David's future is based on the fact that in the past he has done no evil.

29. **Bundle of life** or better *of the living*, occurs only here. The

be risen up to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul,<sup>1</sup> yet the soul<sup>1</sup> of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls<sup>2</sup> of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as from the hollow  
 30. of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have  
 31. appointed thee prince over Israel; that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart<sup>3</sup> unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: and when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine  
 32. handmaid.<sup>4</sup> And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, which sent thee this day  
 33. to meet me: and blessed be thy wisdom, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from blood-guiltiness, and from avenging myself with mine own

<sup>1</sup> Better *life*.<sup>2</sup> Better *lives*.<sup>3</sup> Omit, G.<sup>4</sup> G. adds *to do her good*.

idea is that Jahveh will bind David's life in the bundle of the living, as the spears of grain are bound for preservation. **The book of the living**, Ps. 69 : 28; Phil. 4 : 3; Rev. 13 : 8; 20 : 15, is the later conception of the same idea. **As from**, correctly *in*. The idea is that the life of the enemy would be placed in the hollow of the sling like a stone and cast away.

30. The hand of a writer who was familiar with 16 : 1-13 is shown here.

31. **Grief**, literally *tottering* and so in harmony with *stumbling*=*offence*. In both cases the words are used figuratively expressing qualms of conscience. **Avenged** is an unwarranted liberty in translating, as the word means *deliver*. Supplying *hand* from G. we have: *that the hand of my lord has delivered him*; see v. 33.

Abigail becomes David's wife, vs. 32-42. 32. **Sent thee**. David regards Abigail's discreet action as a divine interposition to keep his hands from shedding blood. Therefore Jahveh has restrained David from hurting Abigail, v. 34, by wiping out the house of her husband.



34. hand. For in very deed, as the LORD, the God of Israel, liveth, which hath withholden me from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning
35. ing light so much as one man child. So David received of her hand that which she had brought him: and he said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy
36. person. And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or
37. more, until the morning light. And it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, that his wife told him these things, and his heart died
38. within him, and he became as a stone. And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote
39. Nabal, that he died. And when David heard that

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35. **Accepted thy person** is literally *lifted up thy face*, cf., *why is thy face fallen?* Gen. 4 : 6. Abigail was downcast, and now David removes the cause of her distress so that she can look up again.

36. **Drunken.** Such a condition was all too common at feasts, even at those that were sacred, 1 : 14, 1 Cor. 11 : 21. Because of his condition, Nabal was not in a condition to profit by the sharp lesson which his wife is prepared to teach him.

37. **When the wine was gone out of Nabal:** G. has: when *Nabal was recovered from [the effects of] the wine.* Both expressions mean *when he was sober.* **Died.** i. e., ceased to beat. The description indicates a stroke of paralysis, brought on by the shock of learning the peril from which he had barely escaped, the scare coming at a time when his vitality was low by reason of his debauch. He lingered ten days and then died. The writer who sees the hand of God in every event, regards Nabal's death as a just penalty from Jahveh.

39. David puts the same construction upon the tragedy. **Concerning or with.** The statement summarizes the details given in v. 40.

Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept back his servant from evil: and the evil-doing of Nabal hath the LORD returned upon his own head. And David sent and spake concerning Abigail, to take her to him to wife. And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David hath sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. And she arose, and bowed herself with her face to the earth, and said, Behold, thine handmaid is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord. And Abigail hastened, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that followed her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife. David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they became both of them his wives. Now Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, which was of Gallim.

26. And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying,

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The immediate marriage of a widow was unobjectionable in Old Testament times, 2 Sam. 11 : 27, and is still common in the Orient.

41 f. Such protestations of humility were not uncommon. **With five damsels** conveys a wrong impression, for her attending maids did not ride, but walked at her feet. The number indicated a person's wealth and position.

43 f. **Ahinoam.** 1 Sam. 27 : 3; 30 : 5; 2 Sam. 2 : 2; 3 : 2; 1 Chron. 3 : 1. **Jezreel** is a Judean town, Josh. 15 : 56. **Michal**, cf. 2 Sam. 3 : 14 f. As David was an outlaw, and as widowhood was an undesirable state, Saul had found another husband for his daughter.

Ch. 26. Saul again is at the mercy of David, but is spared. The story resembles so closely that in ch. 24 that most scholars regard them as duplicate versions of the same event. The plot is identical. Saul pursues David in the wilderness; David stands by the unsuspecting king so that he could kill him at a blow, but refuses because Saul is

- Doth not David hide himself <sup>1</sup> in the hill of Hachilah,  
 2. which is before the desert? Then Saul arose, and  
 went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three  
 thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David  
 3. in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul pitched in the  
 hill of Hachilah, which is before the desert, by the  
 way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he  
 saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.  
 4. David therefore sent out spies, and understood that  
 5. Saul was come of a certainty. And David arose,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. adds *with us* as 23 : 19.

<sup>2</sup> G. adds *stealthily*.

the anointed of Jahveh. He takes material evidence of his opportunity to strike, and from a safe distance pleads his case to the king. Saul is moved by David's magnanimity and withdraws from the pursuit.

The only serious though not insuperable difference is the time and place of the opportunity to slay the king. In one case Saul goes alone in the daytime into a cave where David is hiding; in the other David and a single companion enter the heart of Saul's camp at night. Had there been such a crisis twice it is inconceivable that in the second conversation between Saul and David there should be no hint of an earlier truce. David's plea and Saul's answer are substantially the same in both cases. There are in ch. 26 certain features in common with 23 : 19 ff, a third story of David's narrow escape from Saul, *cf.* further in *Introd.*

1. This is an almost verbatim repetition of 23 : 19.

2. Essentially the same as 24 : 2 except that David is in Ziph, 23 : 19 instead of En-gedi.

3. **Hachilah** is again parallel to 23 : 19 ff. rather than to ch. 24.

4. **Spies.** In view of the statement that *he saw that Saul came after him*, v. 3, the sending of spies would be unnecessary. But reading *unto Nakon* instead of *of a certainty* as in 23 : 23, we see the point. David saw that Saul had entered the wilderness, and sent out spies to ascertain his exact position. They learn that he had reached Nakon, and to that place David advances. G. reads *from Keilah* showing a close relationship to 23 : 19.

5. **Abner** is not mentioned in either of the other stories. **Within the place of the wagons** is a rendering the text will not bear. G. renders *chariot, Saul was lying in a chariot*. But as Smith says Abishai could not then propose to pin him to the ground, v. 8. As in 17 : 20

- and came to the place <sup>1</sup> where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place <sup>1</sup> where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay within the place of the wagons, and the people pitched
6. round about him. Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I
7. will go down with thee. So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the place of the wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head: and Abner and the people
8. lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will
9. not smite him the second time. And David said to

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<sup>1</sup> Omit, G.

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the word seems to mean *encampment*, and that word is suitable here. *Saul was lying in the encampment* and the army was disposed in a circle about him so that to reach Saul one would have to wend his way through a long line of sleeping soldiers. The story assumes that no guards were set.

6. **Ahimelech** is not mentioned elsewhere. Another Hittite was prominent in David's army at a later time, 2 Sam. 11 : 3. He apparently did not volunteer to accompany his chief on the hazardous enterprise.

7. **By night.** We must suppose that from some neighboring height David had watched Saul's army making camp. When night came he proceeded to the spot where Saul lay. **Within the place of the wagons**, better *in the encampment*, cf. v. 5.

8. Here Abishai is the speaker rather than the collective *men of David* of 24 : 3. Abishai was always keen for action, 2 Sam. 16 : 9, and proposed that he should seize the chance offered of Jahveh. **Second time**, i. e., a second blow will not be necessary.

9. In 24 : 6 David alleges the same reason for inaction, but applies

- Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can put forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?
10. And David said, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go
11. down into battle, and perish. The LORD forbid that I should put forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but now take, I pray thee, the spear that is
12. at his head, and the cruse of water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen
13. upon them. Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of the mountain afar off; a great
14. space being between them: and David cried to the

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it to restrain himself as v. 11, though he does check the men too, 24 : 7.

10. David looks for the death of Saul, but feels that he must wait until Jahveh strikes him down, or that natural death shall come, or that he shall fall in battle. There is an intimation of what actually happened; the moment Saul was dead, David sought the throne, 2 Sam. 2 : 1-4.

11. The order is logical here, David securing his evidence after refusing to slay the king, *cf.* note on 24 : 7. **The cruse of water** is not mentioned in v. 7 nor in the sequel v. 22, and is probably interpolated here. The spear like the skirt of the robe, 24 : 4, is a mark of royalty, which Saul always keeps by him, but the jug of water seems to have no significance.

12. **Deep sleep**, *cf.* Gen. 2 : 21. The writer must needs explain the possibility of the entering of Saul's camp, the conversation, and the carrying away of a trophy without discovery. To do this he introduces the supernatural.

13. **A great space** shows that David did not trust Saul when he was awake, and so differing from 24 : 8. The Orientals are famous for the carrying power of their voices.

14. **Answereth thou not** implies that David had shouted for some time without getting a reply. We may infer that David waited

people, and to Abner<sup>1</sup> the son of Ner,<sup>1</sup> saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and  
 15. said, Who art thou that criest to the king? And David  
 said to Abner, Art not thou a *valiant* man? and who is  
 like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not  
 kept watch over thy lord the king? for there came one  
 16. of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This  
 thing is not good that thou hast done. As the LORD  
 liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept  
 watch over your lord, the LORD's anointed. And  
 now, see, where the king's spear is, and the cruse of  
 17. water that was at his head. And Saul knew David's  
 voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And

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<sup>1</sup> G., *he spoke*.

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until daylight, and began calling before Saul's men were awake. With G. it is better to omit *to the king*, for David certainly did not call Saul, though he meant the king to hear his caustic questions to his general.

15. **Valiant** is a clumsy interpolation. David's question is equivalent to *what kind of a man are you?* **One of the people** must refer to Abishai, v. 8. David's sharp rebuke of Abner is full of suggestion. Abner had been from the first Saul's commander-in-chief, 14 : 50. Later David had attained a high position in Saul's army, threatening Abner's position. The intimation that some person had moved Saul against David, 24 : 9, v. 19, gets support from these facts. The sarcastic condemnation of Abner, even declaring that he should be put to death, v. 16, may be due to David's belief that Saul's general had been his enemy.

16. **Ye are worthy**. The change to the plural is unnatural, and the singular is resumed with *see*. David had reproved Abner for failing to guard the king, v. 15. He can hardly propose the execution of the whole army. The commander was responsible, and David's animus is clearly against him and not against the people. It is probable that the singular should be used throughout. **Cruse of water**, *cf.* on v. 11. The phrase is peculiarly suspicious here as it is preceded by the sign of the accusative.

17. *Cf.* 24 : 16 where Saul makes this comment after David has pleaded his case.



18. David said, It is my voice,<sup>1</sup> my lord, O king. And he said, Wherefore doth my lord pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand?
19. Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If it be the LORD that hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if it be the children of men, cursed be they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of the LORD,
20. saying, Go, serve other gods. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.
21. Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my

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<sup>1</sup> G., *my life*.

18-20. David's plea varies considerably from that in 24 : 9-15, yet the vital points and several of the phrases are the same. **Accept**, literally *smell*. Jahveh may have been angry at David and instigated Saul against him; in which case he would be appeased by a suitable offering. **Cursed be they of Jahveh**. David's bitterness indicates his conviction as to the real cause of Saul's animosity, probably having Abner in mind. **Should not cleave**. The idea of the territorial domain of a deity is strong, cf. 2 Kings 5 : 7. Outside of Jahveh's land, David could not worship Jahveh. Did he regard Judah as foreign soil? A flea is due to the influence of 24 : 14, for it makes poor sense here in comparison with a noble game bird; therefore read with G. *my life*. **Partridge** is the usual rendering, but the word means *caller* and is the subject of *hunt*. The point is that Saul seeks David's life as the caller pursues in the mountains. It may refer to the hunter's alluring game by imitating its call.

21 f. Saul's confession is more abject than in 24 : 17. He invites David to rejoin him, an invitation which David shows no inclination to accept. David had not returned the piece of the royal robe, but the spear, which is always so closely associated with Saul, must go back.

- life was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have  
 22. played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. And David answered and said, Behold the spear, O king! let then one of the young men come over and fetch it.  
 23. And the LORD shall render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: forasmuch as the Lord delivered thee into my hand to-day, and I would not put forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed.  
 24. And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.  
 25. Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do mightily, and shalt surely prevail. So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.  
 27. And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in all the borders of Israel: so shall I escape  
 2. out of his hand. And David arose, and passed over,

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23. This is a warning to Saul. David has won favor from Jahveh by his forbearance, and so is under divine protection, an idea more fully developed in v. 24.

25. **Do mightily** contains no hint that David would become a king as 24 : 20 ff. It only means that David shall accomplish great things and prevail over other difficulties as he had over Saul's animosity. **To this place** presumably means to his home as in 24 : 22.

David becomes a vassal to Achish king of Gath, 27-28 : 2. This passage would naturally follow 23 : 19-29.

1. **In his heart** or *mind*, i. e., to himself. **Perish**, David regards the danger as very serious or he would not dream of allying himself with the enemies of Israel. The only suitable connection is with 23 : 19 ff. to which this passage makes a good sequel.

2. **Achish** is the king from whom it is said David had once nar-

- he and the six hundred <sup>1</sup> men that were with him, unto
3. Achish the son of Maoch, king of Gath. And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess,
  4. Nabal's wife. And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him.
  5. And David said unto Achish, If now I have found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with
  6. thee? Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings <sup>2</sup> of Judah unto this day.
  7. And the number of the days that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four

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<sup>1</sup> G. four hundred.

<sup>2</sup> G. king.

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rowly escaped by feigning insanity, 21 : 10 ff. **Maoch** in 1 Kings 2 : 39. *Maacah*, the name of a wife of David who was the mother of Absalom, 2 Sam. 3 : 3.

3. **With his household.** These outlaws had followed David's example and procured themselves wives. The mention of *Abigail*, shows that the death of Nabal precedes this story, cf. 2 Sam. 2 : 2.

5. **In the country.** The word means really wild lands. David wanted to be on the border, where he would be less under the king's eye, where his men would be less associated with the Philistines, and where he would be free to carry out his own plans. He intimates that he is not worthy to reside in the capital.

6. **Ziklag** is reckoned both among the towns of Judah, Josh. 15 : 31 and of Simeon, Josh. 19 : 5. Its site is unknown, but it must have been far from Gath. The Judean title is traced to this donation, the notice showing that the account was written very long after the event. This note may, however, be a later interpolation.

7. **A year and four months.** David remained in Ziklag until Saul had been slain, and he was ready to go to Hebron to be crowned king of Judah, 2 Sam. 1 : 1; 2 : 1.

8. months. And David and his men went up, and made a raid upon the Geshurites, and the Girzites, and the Amalekites: for those *nations* were the inhabitants of the land, which were of old, as thou goest to Shur, 9. even unto the land of Egypt. And David smote the land, and saved neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel; and he returned, and 10. came to Achish. And Achish said, Whither <sup>1</sup> have ye made a raid to-day? And David said, Against the South of Judah, and against the South of the Jerah-

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<sup>1</sup> G. *against whom*. The English rendering implies a correction of the text.

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David's predatory expeditions, vs. 8-12. This passage fits ill with vs. 5-7 for the scene is now Gath, David returning to Achish after each raid. Possibly we can solve the problem sufficiently by transposing the two passages. A large part of the year and four months is covered by this description, for the events covered by 1 Sam. 28-2 Sam. 1, occupied at most a few weeks.

8. **The Geshurites** lived on the east of the Jordan, too far away to fit here. G. has only one name, and as the preposition occurs before one name only in Hebrew, that is probably right, but the original name was presumably the *Gizrites*, a Canaanitish tribe, Judg. 1 : 29. The text of v. 8b is badly corrupted. Smith reads: *for these tribes [or this tribe] dwell in the land which stretches from Telam in the direction of Shur to the land of Egypt*. The only point we can be sure of is that David's raids were in the south country extending towards the border of Egypt, and so as far away as possible from Gath.

9. David did to these people what he had threatened to do to Nabal, and more, for he slew even the women, so that there would be none to contradict his own story, v. 11. He was by this means accumulating considerable wealth.

10. **To-day** does not mean that there were daily raids, for each one would take several days. **South** or *Negeb* is the border land of Judah, joining the desert. The **Jerahmeelites** and **Kenites** were tribes in friendly relation to Judah. David later sent presents to both tribes, 30 : 29, and they probably accepted him as their king.

11. meelites, and against the South of the Kenites. And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring them to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so hath been his manner all the while he hath dwelt in the country of the Philistines. And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.
28. And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their hosts together for warfare,<sup>1</sup> to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me in the host, 2. thou and thy men. And David said to Achish, Therefore thou shalt know<sup>2</sup> what thy servant will do. And

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<sup>1</sup> G. rightly to go out.

<sup>2</sup> Or now find out.

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11. **To bring them to Gath.** Prisoners, especially female, were prized as trophies of victory. David's unusual course was due to the necessity of being loyal to his own people, and at the same time to hoodwink Achish. His ability to do the latter enabled him to remain his unsuspected vassal so long. The second **saying** should be omitted, for what follows could not be the report that a captive would make to Achish, as it would be senseless. It is a general summary of David's course while he was in the Philistine service.

12. **For ever** is a bit strong; *permanently* fits the case better. Achish believes that David has made a return to his own people impossible. With six hundred warriors he was a valuable ally; and as he had maintained this band now for over a year by plunder, it was evident that he was capable. So we are prepared for the next move, to take David's force on a campaign against Israel.

28 : 1. **The Philistines** probably includes a larger force than Achish's Gittites. Desiring to muster as large a force as possible, and trusting David's stories, 27 : 10, Achish orders him to join in the mobilization. The occasion of this war is not given, but we may connect it with 23 : 19 ff.

2. **For ever**, literally *all the days*, i. e., permanently. David's position is highly embarrassing. To fight against Israel would be suicidal so far as his future is concerned; to refuse his chief's order

Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

4. *The Fourth Stage: The Disaster to the House of Saul,*

28 : 3-31

3. Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits,
4. and the wizards, out of the land. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and
5. they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled

would destroy his present easy position. His answer is ambiguous as if he said: thus you will find out what your servant can do. At this point the narrative is interrupted by another story and is resumed at 29 : 1.

Saul visits the witch of En-dor who foretells death and disaster, 28 : 3-25. The dead Samuel is the same as in chs. 7, 8, 15, hence the section is usually assigned to the later sources of the history. Cf. Introduction.

3. **In his own city, in 25 : 1, in his house. Put away out of the land,** on the ground that they were evil. Later the law forbade the practice of those arts, Deut. 18 : 10 f. There were legitimate means of ascertaining the hidden secrets as by the prophet, or by the priest with the ephod, and Saul evidently had tried in vain to suppress the more questionable methods of divination. **Those that had familiar spirits [necromancers] and the wizards.** Smith argues that we should translate *the talismans and necromantic charms*, i. e., the instruments of divination rather than the diviners.

4. The Philistine campaign, the story of which is interrupted, is that begun in v. 1 f. and continued in 29 : 1. **Shunem** is in the plain of Esdraelon and **Gilboa** is in the neighboring hills.

5 f. From the hills Saul could see the overwhelming force of the enemy. The inspection filled him with terror, and he sought in vain to secure divine guidance, but the various devices employed gave no results. The oracles gave him no instructions as to the course he should take. The **Urim** is not named in v. 15, and should



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6. greatly. And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by
7. Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a
8. familiar spirit at En-dor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and went, he and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, Divine unto me, I pray thee, by the familiar spirit, and bring me up whomsoever I shall name unto
9. thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou
- 

be omitted here as it would not be suitable for the present situation, *cf.* note on 14 : 41.

7. **That hath a familiar spirit**, but the phrase differs from v. 3; here it means *one expert in necromancy*, or according to Smith's idea, a talisman used in that art. The special form of divination meant here is the bringing up the spirits of the dead, like spiritualism. The Chronicler regards Saul's act as very wrong and the real cause of his death, 1 Chr. 10 : 13 f. **His servants** knew where a necromancer could be found; so Saul's servant knew where to go for a like purpose, 9 : 6. **En-dor** still exists as a mean village, a short distance north of Shunem where the Philistines were encamped. To reach the place Saul must make a long detour around the enemy.

8. **Disguised himself**, because he had ordered all necromancers banished or slain. On account of his height (10 : 23) disguise would not be easy. The woman would naturally be accustomed to disguises and may have recognized Saul at once. **Divine** is a general term and the method is explained further **by the familiar spirit** which may well refer to an instrument (*cf. the ephod, Urim and Thummin*), as Smith suggests. The object is also clearly stated, to raise the spirit of one that is dead.

9 f. **Cut-off**, in v. 3 *put away*, but the same idea underlies both words. What Saul had done is suggested by the woman's final words **to cause me to die**. It appears that he had ordered all who practiced these arts to be slain. The woman suspects that he is laying a trap for her undoing. She is reassured by Saul's oath, which she knows he will keep.

knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my  
 10. life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no  
 11. punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee?  
 12. And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou  
 13. deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what seest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I see a god coming up out  
 14. of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he

11. **Samuel** is the last person we should expect Saul to want to see. Perhaps he did not want to see him, but he was in despair, and Samuel had at least always been able to tell him what to do.

12. **Samuel.** It is impossible to see any reason why the woman should recognize Saul when she saw Samuel. The king's asking for Samuel, v. 11, is the natural ground for the recognition. Therefore on the basis of a few texts of G. we should render: *then the woman recognized Saul and screamed.* So Nowack and Budde. There was good reason for her alarm.

13. Saul's excitement is evident and is heightened by a reading in G. *what dost thou see? Speak.* The woman has adroitly worked Saul up to this condition, making him an easy victim. We note that Saul never at any time sees any figure. The woman does all the seeing. **A god** or *gods* as the word is *elohim*. We have the phrase *sons of the elohim*, meaning spirits, Job 1 : 6; Ps. 29 : 1. Apparently *elohim* alone is used in the same sense here, the woman saying: *I see a spirit coming up.*

14. **Form** better *appearance*. The description is not very detailed, but Saul was in too tense and excited a state to be critical. The **robe** would at once suggest a painful and, according to one account, the last, encounter with Samuel, 15 : 27, 35. The spirit from Sheol is conceived to preserve the form of latest life and to require clothes. Saul greets the prophet as he would were he alive, though Saul does not see the spirit, in spite of his wearing a robe.

- of? And she said, An old man cometh up; <sup>1</sup> and he is covered with a robe. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, 15. and did obeisance. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou 16. mayest make known unto me what I shall do. And Samuel said, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become 17. thine adversary? And the LORD hath <sup>2</sup> wrought for himself, <sup>2</sup> as he spake by me: and the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy 18. neighbour, even to David. Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, and didst not execute his fierce

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<sup>1</sup> G. adds *from the earth.*

<sup>2</sup> G. has *done to thee.*

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15. **Disquieted**, or disturbed my repose by bringing me up from Sheol. The spirits were supposed to be in a state of unconscious inaction, Job 3 : 13-19; 14 : 12. Samuel was deemed to be helpless when the arts are practiced to bring him up. He holds Saul responsible for the breaking of his repose. **What I shall do** indicates that Saul had not come to get a yes or no to a simple question such as, shall I join battle?

16 f. Saul should have understood the meaning of Jahveh's refusal to answer him at all. **Is become thine adversary** cannot be wrung from the Hebrew text without an emendation accepted by many. A free rendering of G. gives good sense: *and has gone over to thy neighbor*. To this neighbor Jahveh has given the authority rent from Saul, a clear reminiscence of 15 : 28.

18. This verse shows that this section is dependent upon ch. 15. It quite ignores 13 : 7-15. **This thing** refers to the serious plight which Saul himself had described, v. 15. **This day** covers more time than twenty-four hours.

wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done  
 19. this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the LORD  
 will deliver Israel also with thee into the hand of  
 the Philistines: and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons  
 be with me: the LORD shall deliver the host of Israel  
 20. also into the hand of the Philistines. Then Saul fell  
 straightway his full length upon the earth, and was  
 sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there  
 was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all  
 21. the day, nor all the night. And the woman came unto  
 Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto  
 him, Behold, thine handmaid hath hearkened unto thy  
 voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have  
 hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto  
 22. me. Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also  
 unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a  
 morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest

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19. **With me.** The abode in Sheol is not looked upon as a state to be desired. The text is doubtful. G<sup>L</sup>. has: *thou and Jonathan thy son shall be with me.* The best text is that of G<sup>B</sup>.: *thou and thy sons with thee will be fallen.* The last clause of the verse repeats the first, and should be omitted. The forecast is then that the battle will come on the morrow, indicating a Philistine assault, the rout of Israel and the death of Saul and his sons, so that there will be none left to contest David's claim to the throne.

20. **Straightway.** G. suggests: *and Saul was overcome and fell.* The fast, the long night journey, the deep depression and finally the tragic forecast were too much for a man mentally affected, and the collapse is natural.

21. **Sore troubled** is not happy as the words refer to his physical state; *completely overcome* is better, for the king had fainted. **My life.** She overlooks Saul's oath, v. 10. However, she desired now to be as persuasive as possible. She makes her yielding to his desire the basis of her plea that Saul would harken to her. Saul had revived from the faint enough to understand.

23. have strength, when thou goest on thy way. But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, constrained him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth
24. and sat upon the bed. And the woman had a fatted calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it; and she took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake un-
25. leavened bread thereof: and she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.
29. Now the Philistines gathered together all their hosts

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23. **Constrained** may be a compromise. The text means *employed force*; many scholars by a slight change get *urged*. As he *hearkened to their voice*, the latter is more probable. **Bed** or *couch*. Furniture was scarce, and the couch was the only place he could rest easily during the time in which the elaborate meal was preparing.

24 f. **Fatted calf**, *calf of the stall*, and the stall was literally in the house. Meat and bread made a bountiful feast such as was offered to distinguished guests. The sequel to this story is found in ch. 31, though there is no necessary connection.

The story of Saul's interview with the woman of Endor has been variously interpreted, some taking it literally, others believing that the Devil appeared as an impersonation of Samuel, and others regarding the whole story as an invention.

It is perfectly possible to accept the story as it stands without supposing that a discredited old hag could force the spirit of the man of God to arise from the earth at her bidding. The phenomena so minutely described here are exactly what may be seen to day at almost any spiritualistic seance, and may be interpreted in the same way. Saul saw no spirit, and the voice may easily have been the woman's, since Saul was not in a state to be critical. The forecast may have been elaborated by the author of 15:1-16:13, but the prediction of Saul's overthrow was an easy guess to any one knowing the conditions.

David's loyalty is distrusted by the Philistine chiefs, ch. 29. The passage is a direct continuation of the narrative in 28:1 f.

1. **Aphék** was the point of concentration, a favorite center, 4:1. It was near the Philistine country, and not more than three days' march from Ziklag. The Philistines were concentrating, ready to



- to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by the fountain
2. which is in Jezreel. And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: and David and his men passed on in the rearward with Achish.
  3. Then said the princes of the Philistines, What *do* these Hebrews *here*? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days or these years, and I have found no fault in him since
  4. he fell away *unto me* unto this day? But the princes

invade Israel, hence we have a less advanced position than that of 28 : 4. The Israelites occupy the plain, but must have retired to the hills as the enemy advanced.

2. **Lords** represents a Philistine word as in 5 : 8, meaning the rulers of whom there were five, one for each chief city. The magnates do not go **by hundreds**, therefore we must with Budde change the verb *led* [their people] *by*; or better read *hosts* in place of *lords*. **Rearward**. Achish had made David's force his body-guard, 28 : 2, and therefore they would come last to the muster. Perhaps Achish had suspected the attitude of his chiefs, and had purposely kept David out of sight as long as possible.

3. **Princes** represents a different word from *lords* in v. 2, and seems to mean the military leaders. The Hebrew has: *what are these Hebrews?* a meaningless question. R. V. is wrong for Achish does not answer that question. G. has preserved the true text, though the reading is generally overlooked: *who are these passing by?* The generals notice a strange force, entirely unknown to them, and naturally ask who they are. The motley band would hardly have been recognized as Hebrews. **These days or these years**, Heb. *now days or now years*, is a pretty vague statement. With the help of G. we get: *now these two years*, in close enough agreement with 27 : 7. **Fell away** implies desertion, Jer. 21 : 9; 37 : 13. **Unto me** is rightly added from G.

4 f. **Wrath** because Achish had been lacking in failing to see the danger which was so apparent to them. **This fellow** is a gratuitous importation; we should render *should he now reconcile himself*. It is assumed that David had been banished, and would eagerly seize an occasion of making peace with his king. They knew the fame of David, quoting the famous song, 18 : 7; 21 : 12, and they knew who the slain ten thousand were.



of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make the man return,<sup>1</sup> that he may go back <sup>1</sup> to his place where thou hast appointed him, and let him not go <sup>2</sup> down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us: for wherewith should this *fellow* reconcile himself unto his lord? should it not be with the heads of these  
5. men? Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying,

6. Saul hath slain his thousands,  
And David his ten thousands?

Then Achish called David, and said unto him, As the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the  
7. lords favour thee not. Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philis-  
8. tines. And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so

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<sup>1</sup> G. omits.

<sup>2</sup> Or *he shall not go*.

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6. As the Lord liveth is a Hebrew oath, unnatural in the mouth of a Philistine. The phrase shows the Hebrew coloring. Achish is very diplomatic in his difficult task of dismissing David so as not at once to make him the adversary the generals feared he would become in the heat of battle. The lords are the same people before called the *generals* or *princes*, v. 3 f., showing a careless confusion. Achish was one of five chiefs and he had to yield to the majority opposed to him.

8. David's protest is after all histrionic. The suspicion of the lords is better founded than they knew, as he had consistently deceived his benefactor. Doubtless in his heart, he was greatly relieved, for he was delivered from a highly embarrassing situation.

- long as I have been before thee unto this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord
9. the king? And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight,<sup>1</sup> as an angel of God: <sup>1</sup> notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.
10. Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with the servants of thy lord that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light,
11. depart. So David rose up early, he and his men, to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.
30. And it came to pass, when David and his men were

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<sup>1</sup> G. omits.

9. **Angel of God**, or better, *messenger of God* indicates one with a divine mission rather than a divine nature. Here the comparison suggests loyalty; in 2 Sam. 14 : 17, the idea is discernment, and in 19 : 27, justice. **Princes** is here the right term.

10. There is unusual stress upon the command to depart at the very break of day. Perhaps Achish felt that it would not be safe for David to be found in the camp the next day. G. indicates that a suggestive passage has been lost in our text, and we may render the verse in full: *and now rise early in the morning, thou and the servants of thy lord who have come with thee, and proceed to the place where I have appointed you, and lay not up in thy heart a senseless speech, for thou art good in my sight; and be early on your way, as soon as you can see, and get away.* The *senseless speech* is the charges of disloyalty made by the generals.

11. Instead of **in the morning to return** G. has the suggestive reading *and to guard*, suggesting that Achish had proposed as a balm to David's supposedly wounded feelings that he go back to defend the homes of the absent warriors. **To Jezreel** indicates that after David's dismissal, the Philistine army advanced to the great plain where Saul's force was encamped.

David recovers the spoil of his plundered city, ch. 30. 30 : 1-6. The disaster at Ziklag. 1. **Ziklag**, G. has *Keilah*, according to which David heard of the raid while still on the way back from *Aphek*. This fits well with his arrival at Ziklag described in v. 3.

- come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had made a raid upon the South, and upon Ziklag,
2. and had smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; and had taken captive the women *and all*<sup>1</sup> that were therein, both small and great: they slew not any,<sup>2</sup> but
  3. carried them off, and went their way. And when David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and
  4. their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice
  5. and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

<sup>1</sup> So G.<sup>2</sup> G. *man or woman.*

3. This appears to be the point at which David reaches Ziklag, and sees the ruin left by the raiders. **Taken captives.** This fact could not have been known at the time. Nothing is said about the cattle now. The Amalekites had taken advantage of his absence, and had done to him as he had been doing to others.

4 f. This extreme emotional outburst is characteristic of the Orientals. Emphasis is laid upon the loss of David's wives, though they were covered by the general statement of v. 3.

6. **Greatly distressed** is scarcely adequate; the idea is *he was in great straits*, not now because of the losses, but because of the outbreak in his band, who were on the point of stoning him to death. The leader is held to be responsible, especially if there had been opposition to the expedition with the Philistines. **Strengthened himself** means that David used his resources by the aid of his God, and so was prompt to take action. Instead of merely trying to quell the mutineers, he prepares to lead them against those who had

7. And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod.<sup>1</sup> And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.<sup>1</sup>
8. And David inquired of the LORD, saying, If I pursue after this troop, shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake
9. *them*, and shalt without fail recover *all*. So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were
10. left behind stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred stayed behind, which

---

<sup>1</sup> G. omits.

---

plundered them. He will give them a chance to stone the real culprits.

David reaches the camp of the Amalekites, vs. 7-15. 7. Abiathar had brought the ephod to David after his flight from Nob, 1 Sam. 22: 20; 23: 6.

8. We should read: *Shall I pursue this troop? Will I overtake them?* The first question is the vital one, and the one which is directly answered. Jahveh promises more than is asked, a complete rescue of the captives. The word rendered **troop**, recurring frequently in the passage, really means a marauding band.

9. **Brook**, or rather in early Hebrew, the *wadi* or valley through which a stream flows. **Besor** is not named elsewhere, and its location is unknown. Since a part of David's force was exhausted (but cf. note on v. 10), it must have been some distance from Ziklag. **Where those that were left behind stayed** is a forced rendering of an obscure phrase. Literally it says, *and those that were left over stayed*, i. e., in Ziklag. Some writers treat the words as a gloss. G. at least makes good sense: *and he left there two hundred men*. The phrase unnecessarily anticipates v. 10.

10. The word rendered *were faint* occurs only here and in v. 21. The noun means *corpse*, hence the verb should mean *to be dead*, and that is too strong. Again we find a clear text in G. going back to v. 9b we have: *He left there two hundred men, and he pushed on with four hundred. Now the two hundred who remained across the wadi Besor stayed to serve as a guard*. This text gives a different color to David's plan. He was approaching the haunts of the enemy; but he did not know where they were. He divides his force, leaving

were so faint that they could not go over the brook  
 11. Besor: and they found an Egyptian in the field, and  
 brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he  
 12. did eat; and they gave him water to drink: and they  
 gave him a piece of a cake of figs,<sup>1</sup> and two clusters of  
 raisins; <sup>1</sup> and when he had eaten, his spirit came again  
 to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any  
 13. water, three days and three nights. And David said  
 unto him, To whom belondest thou? and whence art  
 thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt,  
 servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, be-  
 14. cause three days ago I fell sick. We made a raid  
 upon the South of the Cherethites, and upon that  
 which belongeth to Judah, and upon the South of  
 15. Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire. And David

---

<sup>1</sup> Omit, G.

---

one-third to watch and guard the rear while he advances with his main body.

12. **Figs and raisins** were a part of the supplies brought by Abigail, 25:18; they were common articles of food. **Spirit came again** shows that the Egyptian was as good as dead when he was found. **Three days** indicates that the raiders were in time that far ahead of the pursuers; but David had at least found their trail. The slave was discovered by some of the scouts who had been spread out in advance, looking for signs.

13. **Belondest thou.** The fact that he was a poor Egyptian in that country proved that he was a slave. **And he said.** G. renders the same text: *and the Egyptian said, I am the slave of an Amalekite.* **Fell sick,** so that he could not keep on with the raiders who would not risk pausing until they reached a place of safety.

14. In v. 3 the place of the raid is stated in general terms, *upon the Negeb* or **South.** The Egyptian who had been with the mauraders gives fuller details, showing that Ziklag was but one of many places plundered. The fact that Ziklag alone was burned was due to its defencelessness or as an act of revenge.

15. The Egyptian could lead David to the raiders, either because



- said to him, Wilt thou bring me down to this troop? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me up into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this troop.<sup>1</sup>
16. And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad over all the ground, eating and drinking, and feasting, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines,
17. and out of the land of Judah. And David<sup>2</sup> smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels and
18. fled. And David recovered all that the Amalekites
19. had taken: and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David brought

---

<sup>1</sup> G. adds: *and he swore unto him.*

<sup>2</sup> G. adds, *came upon them and.*

---

he had heard them say where they were going, or because he knew their favorite haunts where they could store spoils.

David destroys the band of Amalekites. vs. 16-20. 16. **Spread abroad**, or more exactly, *left to themselves over the face of the whole country*. Discipline was relaxed as the raiders felt they had reached a secure hiding place; each one was free to do as he liked. Doubtless they were widely scattered, and so an easy prey for David.

17. A two days' battle is inconceivable under the circumstances. Everything indicates that the surprise was complete and the action short and decisive. By the aid of G. we may get: *he smote them from twilight until the evening; and he slew them, so that not a man escaped*. The camels were too fast to be overtaken by men on foot.

19. Stress is laid upon the recovery of all that the robbers had taken from Ziklag, though the wives of the band are not specified here. The captives would be apart by themselves and so escape danger in the battle.



20. back all. And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drave before those *other* cattle, and said,
21. This is David's spoil. And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom also they <sup>1</sup> had made to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when
22. David came near to the people, he saluted them. Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of

---

<sup>1</sup> G., *he*, i. e., David.

20. The text is so corrupt that a part of the verse is unintelligible. It is clear that it means that the Hebrews took a lot of booty beyond the recovery of their own. The Amalekites had raided other places than Ziklag, and all their plunder was taken by David. That this rich prize all became David's, as the text implies, is impossible in view of the dispute about the distribution of the surplus, v. 22. On the other hand, David did have a liberal share so that he was able to send generous gifts to the chiefs of several cities, vs. 26-31. In its original form the verse apparently described this condition, and we cannot get it now out of any text or any proposed emendation. G. reads: *and David took all the sheep and the cattle, and led them in front of the spoils; and of those spoils it was said, this is the spoil of David.* Wellhausen's reading is: *and they took all the sheep and cattle and drove them before him and said, this is David's spoil.* Smith suggests: *all the sheep and cattle which the Amalekites had driven before them [taken away for themselves] this also became David's spoil.* Wellhausen's emendation is based on the Vulgate, and is perhaps the best we can do, especially if we agree with Nowack that the phrase, *this is David's spoil*, does not signify personal possession, but is a tribute to the great leader.

A new law is established in Israel, vs. 21-25. 21. **Were faint.** G. reads *who were left behind from following David*, cf. note on v. 10, an interpretation confirmed by the better reading *he made them remain at Besor*. This force came forward to meet the returning victors, and reading again with G., *they ask him of his welfare*. They are the ones eager for news as to the outcome of the expedition.

22. Certain of those who had borne the "burden and heat of the day," insisted that none of the recovered spoil should be given to the two hundred who had done nothing more strenuous than guard the camp. It was conceded that they should receive their wives and

- those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them aught of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given unto us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the troop that came against us into our hand. And who will hearken unto you in this matter? for as his share is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his share be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall share alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel, unto this day. And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD; to them which were in Beth-el, and to

children, but their cattle would belong to those who had fought for their recovery.

23 f. David rules that Jahveh had restored their goods, note the favorable counsel, v. 8, and so the contention of the men that the booty belonged to those who won it, was inadmissible. The booty was Jahveh's and therefore it must be divided equally. There seems to have been no effort to give back to each one what he had previously possessed. David here asserts himself as absolute in authority. The question in v. 24 sounds strange; we should expect: *let everyone harken to me in this matter.*

25. This is an interesting case of a law resulting from a judicial decision. In America the decision of a court has more binding force than the act of a legislative body.

David sends presents out of his spoil to the elders of several Judean towns, vs. 26-31. There can be no doubt what his object was. At this time Saul was slain, and the feeble remnant of his government was driven across the Jordan. David took steps immediately to secure the crown of Judah, 2 Sam. 2.

27. **Bethel** is not the well-known town in the hills of Ephraim, but

- them which were in Ramoth of the South, and to  
 28. them which were in Jattir; and to them which were  
 in Aroer, and to them which were in Siphmoth, and  
 29. to them which were in Eshtemoa; and to them which  
 were in Racal, and to them which were in the cities of  
 the Jerahmeelites, and to them which were in the cities  
 30. of the Kenites; and to them which were in Hormah,  
 and to them which were in Cor-ashan, and to them  
 31. which were in Athach; and to them which were in  
 Hebron, and to all the places where David himself  
 and his men were wont to haunt.

a place in the Judean wilderness, Josh. 15 : 30. **Ramoth of the South**, or *Ramoth-negeb* was assigned to Simeon, Josh. 19 : 8. **Jattir** was a Judean town in the south, Josh. 15 : 48.

28. **Aroer**, Josh. 15 : 22, was in the vicinity of Beersheba. **Siphmoth** is not named elsewhere. **Eshtemoa** is named close to **Jattir**, Josh. 15 : 50; 21 : 14.

29. **Racal** is quite unknown. G. has *Carmel* the place whence David had obtained one of his wives, ch. 25. **Jerahmeelites** and **Kenites** were the people upon whom David had professed to make his raids, 27 : 10. Both of these clans were closely bound to the fortunes of Judah.

30. **Hormah** was famous in the early history, Num. 14 : 45; 21 : 1-3; according to Josh. 15 : 21, 30, it lay "toward the border of Edom." **Cor-ashan**, or rightly **Bor-ashan** is probably an error for *Beersheba* as we find in G. The omission of such a well-known place would, as Smith says, be inexplicable. **Athach** in Josh. 15 : 42, 19 : 7. *Athar*. The place is quite unknown. Smith would substitute **Arad**, cf. Judg. 1 : 16.

31. **Hebron** is well known as the first place conquered by the tribe of Judah and its allies, Judg. 1 : 10, and as the first capital of the kingdom of Judah, where David reigned for seven years, 2 Sam. 2 : 1-4; 5 : 1-5. **And to all the places** we must either understand *even to all the places*, or *and to all the other places*. The southern wilderness of Judah had been David's haunts during all the period, obviously of considerable length, while Saul was trying to catch and slay him. His manner of life we can infer from the story of Nabal, ch. 25. David had acted as the protector of these places, so exposed to the raids of the Bedouin, and thus had prepared the way for his appointment as king of that land.

31. Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell  
 2. down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers overtook him; and he  
 3. was greatly distressed by reason of the archers. Then said Saul to his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come <sup>1</sup> and thrust me through,<sup>1</sup> and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid.

<sup>1</sup> Omit, Chr.

The death of Saul and his sons and the rout of Israel, ch. 31. This story is the first to be incorporated by the Chronicler, 1 Chron. 10. There are the usual variations in the text. The section is a continuation of 29 : 11. The time is the night after Saul's visit to the witch of En-dor, 28 : 3 ff.

1. **Slain.** The Hebrew word means *pierced*, but here with the implication of a fatal thrust. **Mount Gilboa.** Probably the Hebrews retired upon the hills where they were pursued by the relentless foe, and were rapidly falling as the attack was pressed home.

2. A king was a special object of attack, cf. 1 Kings 22 : 31. It is a striking fact that Saul's three sons fell before the foe reached the father. Jonathan we know was a brave man, and his brothers seem to have been like him.

3. **Archers.** The Hebrew has, *shooters, men with the bow*, the last words being apparently an explanatory gloss. **Overtook** gives a wrong idea, for Saul was beset by archers. The word is literally *found*, and the meaning is that *the archers found Saul* with their arrows. It is like our military expression, "the artillery found the target." **Distressed** is wrong, the word is really *trembled*. It is better to follow G. and read, *he was badly wounded by the archers*, for then we have a suitable setting for his request that his armorbearer slay him. Saul was hurt so that further flight was impossible.

4. **And thrust me through** must be omitted; otherwise there would be no possibility of *abuse* which refers to various forms of mutilation, (cf. Judg. 1 : 6), or mockery of a helpless captive. **Afraid** refers to

5. Therefore Saul took his sword, and fell upon it. And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he
6. likewise fell upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer,
7. and all his men, that same day together. And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were beyond Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.
8. And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul
9. and his three <sup>1</sup> sons fallen in mount Gilboa. <sup>2</sup> And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour,<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Omit, Chr.<sup>2</sup> Chr. and they stripped him and took his head and his armor.

the awe inspired by a king. The squire dare not slay the Lord's anointed, even at his request. The ancient writers doubted the possibility of Saul's salvation because he committed suicide, a phenomenon rarely mentioned in the Bible. According to another version of Saul's death, he was slain at his request by an Amalekite, 2 Sam. 1 : 9.

6. For **his armorbearer** Chronicles has *all his house*. **And all his men** is lacking in Chron., and may be spared, for the Philistines could not get the whole army. The main point is that Saul's family was practically wiped out in one day, and thus the way was prepared for David.

7. It is better to follow the simple text of Chron.: *And all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that the men of Israel fled and that Saul, etc.* The Israelites across the Jordan were not affected by the disaster; probably the fugitives fled to the east of the Jordan, for there Abner set up the kingdom of Esh-baal, 2 Sam. 2 : 8 ff. The **valley** was either the plain of Esdraelon or the valley of the Jordan, probably the former as it was close to the scene of the disastrous battle.

8. **On the morrow.** The battle had lasted till night. **Strip the slain.** The victors carry off as much plunder as possible, chiefly weapons and clothing.

9. **The head** was a much prized trophy, cf. 17 : 54. **Sent** implies

sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry the tidings unto the house of their idols, and to  
 10. the people. And they put his armour in the house of the Ashtaroth:<sup>1</sup> and they fastened his body to the  
 11. wall of Beth-shan. And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard<sup>2</sup> concerning him<sup>2</sup> that which the  
 12. Philistines had done to Saul, All the valiant men arose,<sup>3</sup> and went all night,<sup>3</sup> and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons<sup>4</sup> from the wall of Beth-shan;<sup>4</sup> and they came to Jabesh, and burnt them  
 13. there. And they took their bones, and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

<sup>1</sup> Chr., *their god*.<sup>2</sup> Omit G., Chr.<sup>3</sup> Omit, Chr.<sup>4</sup> Omit, Chr.

*head and armour* as its object. Probably the meaning is that the victors sent messengers to carry the news to their idols, for with Chr. it is better to omit *house*.

10. **Ashtaroth** refers to the Phœnician goddess *Ashtoreth* who was worshipped as Askkelon. For **fastened** to we should probably read with Lagarde *exposed on*. **Beth-shan** was at the junction of the valleys of Jezreel and the Jordan. This city must have been one of those vacated by the fleeing Israelites, v. 7.

11 ff. **Jabesh-gilead** was the city Saul had saved from the Ammonites, c. 11. These people did not lack gratitude. **And burnt them there** is omitted by Chr., probably because the act was distasteful to him. **Fasted** was a common mark of respect to the dead. Chronicles adds a passage explaining Saul's death as due to his disobedience and to his consulting the witch and declaring that the kingdom fell to David, 1 Chr. 10: 13 f.





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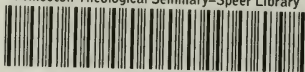






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